





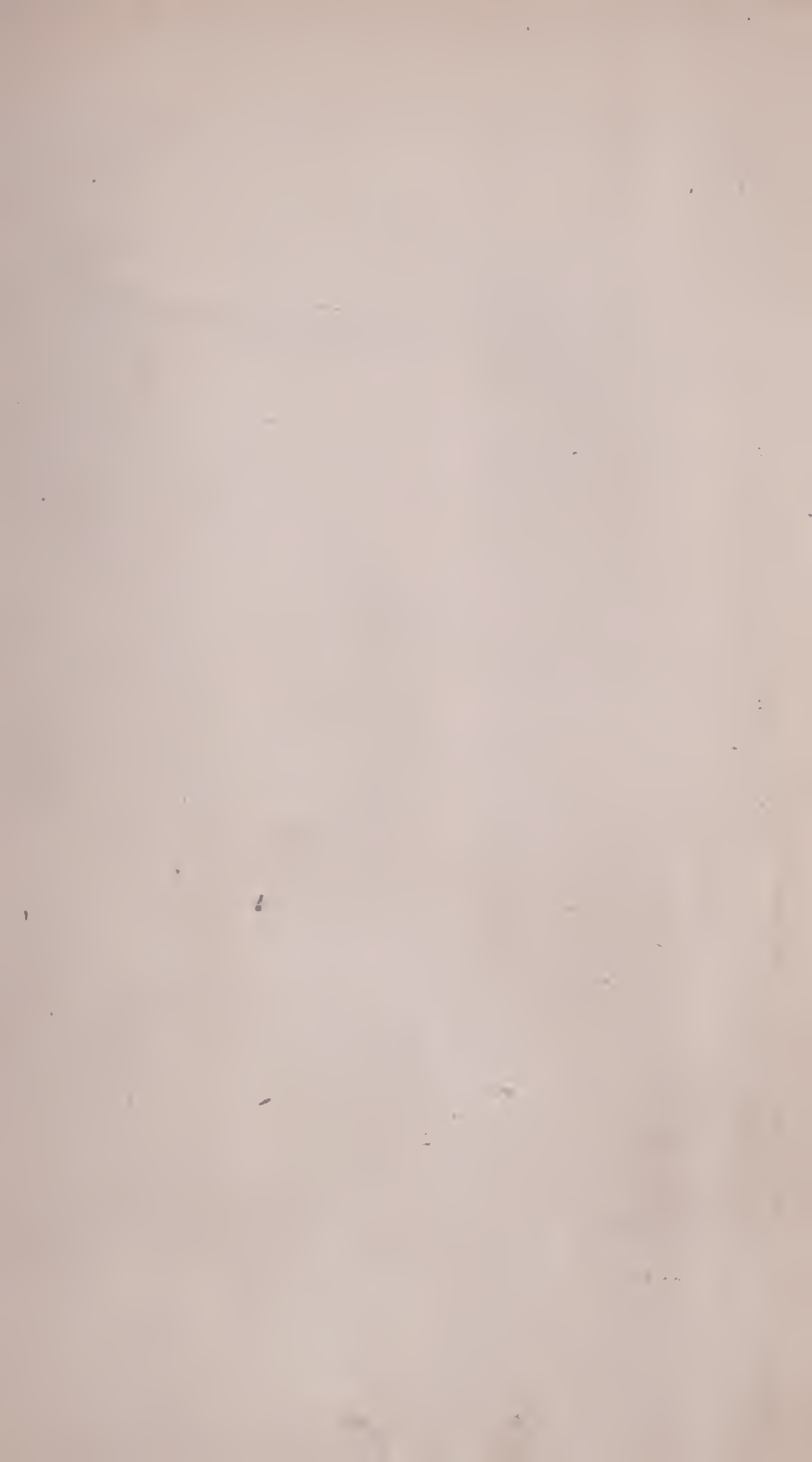


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RUINS OF A TEMPLE AND STATUE OF BUDDHA AT AYUTHIA

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SIAM,

THE LAND OF THE WHITE ELEPHANT,

AS IT WAS AND IS.

COMPILED AND ARRANGED BY

GEORGE B. BACON.

2670. 9

NEW YORK:  
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1873.

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*C O N T E N T S.*

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	PAGE
CHAPTER I	
Early intercourse with Siam—Relations with other countries.	1
CHAPTER II	
Geography of Siam .....	10
CHAPTER III	
Old Siam—Its history .....	21
CHAPTER IV.	
The story of Constantine Phaulcon .....	41
CHAPTER V.	
Modern Siam—The present dynasty .....	69
CHAPTER VI.	
First impressions of the Meinam .....	78
CHAPTER VII.	
A royal gentleman .....	92
CHAPTER VIII	
Phrabat Somdetch Phra Paramendr Maha Mongkut .....	111

	PAGE
CHAPTER IX.	
Sir Harry Ord's visit to Hua-wan—The great eclipse—An astronomical fête.....	134
CHAPTER X.	
Ayuthia.....	152
CHAPTER XI.	
Mouhot's travels.—The country beyond and about Ayuthia..	165
CHAPTER XII.	
Mouhot's visit to Phrabat and Patawi.....	180
CHAPTER XIII.	
From Bangkok to Chantaboun—A missionary journey in 1835	197
CHAPTER XIV.	
Mouhot's visit to Chantaboun and the islands of the gulf....	225
CHAPTER XV.	
Mouhot in the hill-country of Chantaboun.....	238
CHAPTER XVI.	
Pechaburi or P'ripp'ree .....	256
CHAPTER XVII.	
From Bangkok to Birmah—Dr. Collins's journey.....	273
CHAPTER XVIII.	
Varieties of Siamese life.....	288
CHAPTER XIX.	
Births, marriages, and deaths.....	298
CHAPTER XX.	
Old and new Bangkok.....	315



CONTENTS.

v

CHAPTER XXI.

PAGE

Natural productions of Siam..... 328

CHAPTER XXII.

Christian missions in Siam—The outlook for the future..... 341



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.



	PAGE
RUINS OF A TEMPLE AND STATUE OF BUDDHA AT AYUTHIA . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
INUNDATION OF THE MEINAM . . . . .	16
PAGODA AT AYUTHIA . . . . .	26
VIEW TAKEN FROM THE CANAL OF AYUTHIA . . . . .	36
RUINS OF A PAGODA AT AYUTHIA . . . . .	46
THE GREAT TOWER OF THE PAGODA WAT CHANG . . . . .	56
DETAILS OF THE GREAT TOWER OF THE PAGODA WAT CHANG . . . . .	60
THE REIGNING FIRST KING OF SIAM . . . . .	70
GENERAL VIEW OF BANGKOK . . . . .	81
THE LATE SECOND KING . . . . .	92
THE PRESENT SECOND KING, GEORGE WASHINGTON . . . . .	102
THE LATE FIRST KING AND QUEEN . . . . .	112
ONE OF THE SONS OF THE LATE FIRST KING . . . . .	126
A FEW OF THE CHILDREN OF THE LATE FIRST KING . . . . .	140
REMOVAL OF THE TUFT OF A YOUNG SIAMESE . . . . .	150
ELEPHANTS IN AN ENCLOSURE OR PARK AT AYUTHIA . . . . .	160
VIEW OF PAKNAM ON THE MEINAM . . . . .	168
PAGODA AT MOUNT PHRABAT . . . . .	180
VIEW OF THE MOUNTAINS OF KORAT FROM PATAWI . . . . .	192
LION ROCK, AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE PORT OF CHANTABOUN . . . . .	198
PORT OF CHANTABOUN . . . . .	226
MONKEYS PLAYING WITH A CROCODILE . . . . .	236
SIAMESE ACTORS . . . . .	250
VIEW OF THE MOUNTAINS OF PECHABURI . . . . .	256
PORTRAIT OF PRINCE KHROM LUANG . . . . .	266

	PAGE
SIAMESE WOMEN . . . . .	280
SIAMESE ROPE-DANCER . . . . .	292
SIAMESE LADIES AT DINNER . . . . .	298
BUILDING ERECTED AT FUNERAL OF SIAMESE OF HIGH RANK	308
BUILDING FOR THE INCREMATION OF SIAMESE OF HIGH RANK	312
HALL OF AUDIENCE, PALACE OF BANGKOK . . . . .	322
PORTICO OF THE AUDIENCE HALL AT BANGKOK . . . . .	326
THE NEW PALACE OF THE KING OF SIAM, BANGKOK . . . . .	340







Map of

SIAM, CAMBODIA THE LAOS COUNTRY &c.

5 10 20 30 40 50  
English Miles

# S I A M .

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## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY INTERCOURSE WITH SIAM.—RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

THE acquaintance of the Christian world with the kingdom and people of Siam dates from the beginning of the sixteenth century, and is due to the adventurous and enterprising spirit of the Portuguese. It is difficult for us, in these days when Portugal occupies a position so inconsiderable, and plays a part so insignificant, among the peoples of the earth, to realize what great achievements were wrought in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by the peaceful victories of the early navigators and discoverers from that country, or by the military conquests which not seldom followed in the track of their explorations. It was while Alphonso d'Albuquerque was occupied with a military expedition in Malacca, that he seized the occasion to open diplomatic intercourse with Siam. A lieutenant under his command, who was fitted for the service by an



experience of captivity, during which he had acquired the Malay language, was selected for the mission. He was well received by the king, and came back to his general, bringing royal presents and proposals to assist in the siege of Malacca. So cordial a response to the overtures of the Portuguese led to the more formal establishment of diplomatic and commercial intercourse. And before the middle of the sixteenth century a considerable number of Portuguese had settled, some of them in the neighborhood of the capital, (Ayuthia,) and some of them in the provinces of the peninsula of Malacca, at that time belonging to the kingdom of Siam. One or two adventurers, such as De Seixas and De Mello, rose to positions of great power and dignity under the Siamese king. And for almost a century the Portuguese maintained, if not an exclusive, certainly a preëminent right to the commercial and diplomatic intercourse which they had inaugurated.

As in other parts of the East Indies, however, the Dutch presently began to dispute the supremacy of their rivals, and, partly by the injudicious and presumptuous arrogance of the Portuguese themselves, succeeded in supplanting them. The cool and mercenary cunning of the greedy Hollanders was more than a match for the proud temper of the hot-blooded Dons. And as, in the case of Japan, the story of Simabara lives in history to witness what shameless and unscrupulous wickedness commercial rivalry could lead to ; so in Siam there is for fifty years a story of intrigue and greed, over-



reaching itself first on one side and then on the other. First, the Portuguese were crowded out of their exclusive privileges. And then in turn, the Dutch were obliged to surrender theirs. To-day there are still visible in the jungle, near the mouth of the Meinam River, the ruins of the Amsterdam which grew up between the years 1672 and 1725, under the enterprise of the Dutch East India Company, protected and fostered by the Siamese government. And to-day, also, the descendants of the Portuguese, easy to be recognized, notwithstanding the mixture of blood for many generations, hold insignificant or menial offices in the king's court.

As the result of the Portuguese intercourse with Siam, there came the introduction of the Christian religion by the Jesuit missionaries, who, as in China and Japan, were quick to follow in the steps of the first explorers. No hindrance was put in the way of the unmolested exercise of religious rites by the foreign settlers. Two churches were built; and the ecclesiastics in charge of the church at Ayuthia had begun to acquire some of that political influence which is so irresistible a temptation to the Roman Catholic missionary, and so dangerous a possession when he has once acquired it. It is probable enough (although the evidence does not distinctly appear) that this tendency of religious zeal towards political intrigue inflamed the animosity of the Dutch traders, and afforded them a convenient occasion for undermining the supremacy of their rivals. However this may be, the Christian religion did not make any great headway among the Siamese people.

And while they conceded to the foreigners religious liberty, they showed no eagerness to receive from them the gift of a new religion.

In the year 1604 the Siamese king sent an ambassador to the Dutch colony at Bantam, in the island of Java. And in 1608 the same ambassador extended his journey to Holland, expressing "much surprise at finding that the Dutch actually possessed a country of their own, and were not a nation of pirates, as the Portuguese had always insinuated." The history of this period of the intercourse between Siam and the European nations, abundantly proves that the shrewdness, the enterprise, and the diplomatic skill were not on one side only.

Between Siam and France there was no considerable intercourse until the reign of Louis XIV., when an embassy of a curiously characteristic sort was sent out by the French monarch. The embassy was ostentatiously splendid, and made great profession of a religious purpose no less important than the conversion of the Siamese king to Christianity. The origin of the mission was strangely interesting, and the record of it, even after the lapse of nearly two hundred years, is so lively and instructive that it deserves to be reproduced, in part, in another chapter of this volume. The enterprise was a failure. The king refused to be converted, and was able to give some dignified and substantial reasons for distrusting the religious interest which his "esteemed friend, the king of France," had taken "in an affair which seems to belong to God, and which

the Divine Being appears to have left entirely to our discretion." Commercially and diplomatically, also, as well as religiously, the embassy was a failure. The Siamese prime minister, (a Greek by birth, a Roman Catholic by religion,) at whose instigation the French king had acted, soon after was deposed from his office, and came to his death by violence. The Jesuit priests were put under restraint and detained as hostages, and the military force which accompanied the mission met with an inglorious fate. A scheme which seemed at first to promise the establishment of a great dominion tributary to the throne of France, perished in its very conception.

The government of Spain had early and somewhat important relations with Siam, through the Spanish colony in the Philippine Islands; and on one or more occasions there was an interchange of courtesies and good offices between Manilla and Ayuthia. But the Spanish never had a foothold in the kingdom, and the occasional and unimportant intercourse referred to, ceased almost wholly until, during the last fifty years, and even the last twenty, a new era of commercial activity has brought the nations of Europe and America into close and familiar relations with the Land of the White Elephant.

The relations of the kingdom of Siam with its immediate neighbors have been full of the vicissitudes of peace and war. There still remains some trace of a remote period of partial vassalage to the Chinese Empire, in the custom of sending gifts—which were originally understood, by the recipients



at least, if not by the givers, to be tribute to Peking. With Birmah and Pegu on the one side, and with Cambodia and Cochin China on the other, there has been from time immemorial a state of jealous hostility. And the boundaries of Siam, eastward and westward, have fluctuated with the successes or defeats of the Siamese arms. Southward the deep gulf shuts off the country from any neighbors, whether good or bad. And for more than three centuries it has been the highway of a commerce of unequal importance, sometimes very active and remunerative, and never wholly interrupted even in the period of the most complete reactionary seclusion of the kingdom.

The new era in Siam may be commercially dated from the year 1854, when the existing treaties between Siam on the one part, and Great Britain and the United States on the other part, were successfully negotiated. But before this time, various influences had been quietly at work to produce a change of such singular interest and importance. The change is indeed a part of that great movement by which the whole Oriental world has been re-discovered in our day ; by which China has been started on a new course of development and progress ; by which Japan has been made to lay aside the hostile seclusion of two hundred years. It is hard to fix the precise date of a movement which is the result of tendencies so various and so numerous, and which is evidently, as yet, only at the beginning of its history. But the treaty negotiated by Sir John Bowring, as the ambassador of Great Britain,

and that negotiated by the Honorable Townsend Harris, as the ambassador of the United States, served to call public attention in those two countries to a land which was previously almost unheard of except by geographical students. There was no popular narrative of travel and exploration. Indeed, there had been no travel and exploration much beyond the walls of Bangkok or the ruins of Ayuthia. The German, Mandelslohe, is the earliest traveller who has left a record of what he saw and heard. His visit to Ayuthia, to which he gave the name which subsequent travellers have agreed in bestowing on Bangkok, the present capital—"The Venice of the East"—was made in 1537. The Portuguese, Mendez Pinto, whose visit was made in the course of the same century, has also left a record of his travels, which is evidently faithful and trustworthy. We have also the records of various embassies, and the narratives of missionaries, (both the Roman Catholic, and, during the present century, the American Protestant missionaries,) who have found time, amid their arduous and discouraging labors, to furnish to the Christian world much valuable information concerning the people among whom they have chosen to dwell.

Of these missionary records, by far the most complete and the most valuable is the work of Bishop Pallegoix, (published in French in the year 1854,) entitled *Description du Royaume Thai ou Siam*. The long residence of the excellent Bishop in the country of which he wrote, and in which, not many years afterward, (in 1862,) he died, sincerely la-

mented and honored, fitted him to speak with intelligent authority. And his book was of especial value at the time when it was published, because the Western Powers were engaged that very year in the successful attempt to renew and to enlarge their treaties with Siam. To Bishop Pallegoix the English envoy, Sir John Bowring, is largely indebted, as he does not fail to confess, for a knowledge of the history, manners and customs of the realm, which helped to make the work of his embassy more easy, and also for much of the material which gives the work of Bowring himself (*The Kingdom and People of Siam*, 1857) its value. This work of Bowring has been for fifteen years the principal source of information to which English readers have had access, except as the more or less inadequate sketches of travel in newspapers and magazines made the name and history of the kingdom, and its surprising progress in civilization and enlightenment, familiar to the world.

Since Sir John Bowring wrote, however, the interior of Siam has been largely explored, and especially by one adventurous traveller, Henry Mouhot, who lost his life in the jungles of Laos, while engaged in his work of exploration. To him, more than to any other one man, we owe our knowledge of the interior of Siam, and of the adjoining and partly dependent countries, Laos and Cambodia. His narrative of adventure is always fresh and lively, and the impression which one receives of his personal courage and good humor makes his volumes full of interest and entertainment. The scientific

results of his travel are unfortunately not given in such orderly completeness as would have been given to them had Mouhot lived to arrange and to supplement the details of his fragmentary and outlined journal. But notwithstanding these necessary defects, Mouhot's book deserves a high place, as giving the most adventurous exploration of a country which appears more interesting the more and better it is known. The great ruins of Ongkor Wat, for example, just beyond the boundary which separates Siam from Cambodia, were by him for the first time examined, measured, and reported with exact and detailed description.

Another work of some value as giving an insight into the domestic life of the late king, was published in Boston, by Mrs. A. H. Leonowens, two years ago.

To all of these works, as well as to the Bangkok Calendar, published for a number of years past, at the Siamese capital, (under the patronage of the government, and frequently with the most curious contributions from the pen of his late Majesty, the First King,) and also to some original materials in the possession of the compiler, the present volume will be indebted.



## CHAPTER II.

### GEOGRAPHY OF SIAM.

CONCERNING a country, the boundaries of which are determined by the variable fortunes of more or less incessant war with neighbors to the east and to the west, it is difficult to speak with geographical exactness. The dominions of His Majesty the King of Siam extend in reality so far as, and no further than, the somewhat uncertain success of his armies towards Birmah on the one hand, and towards Anam on the other, enable him to exact obedience and tribute. The Birmese have more than once been seen victorious in the valley of the Meinam, and even down to the shores of the Gulf, into which it empties. On the other hand, the territory of Siam has extended, not in name only, but in reality, to the western coast of the Malayan peninsula, and the waters of the Indian Ocean. Eastward, Cambodia lies uncomfortably squeezed between Siam and Cochin China, independent of neither, tributary to both. Northward, a mountain barrier defines more naturally and precisely the limits of the Chinese Empire on the one side, and



the kingdom of Siam upon the other. Somewhat loosely, we may say that the country stretches from the 4th to the 20th or 22nd degree of north latitude, and between the 96th and 102nd degrees of east longitude. This calculation would give an area about 1,200 miles in length, but of unequal breadth; in the extreme south measuring less than a hundred miles from east to west, but from the 13th to the 20th degree of latitude about four hundred miles. But even of this territory the sovereignty is, as has been said, uncertain; only as human nature is the same in Siam as elsewhere, it is safe to say that the government controls all that it can grasp, whether that be more or less.

Evidently enough, however, it is about the great river of Siam—the Meinam—that the wealth and population of the country gathers. Almost as much as in the case of Egypt, it is a country of one great river and of one rich valley. Rising among the snows of the mountain ranges, which form the watershed of the Indian Ocean—and which are a continuation eastward of the Himalayas—it pursues a direct course southward for eight hundred miles, dividing into several outlets, like the Nile, and reaching the Gulf through a flat, alluvial country and by three different mouths. The great fertile plain through which this river flows, thickly grown with jungle and forest, and of almost unlimited productiveness, constitutes the greater and more important part of the Siamese realm. Northward the plain rises more and more into hills and mountain ranges, till the lofty summits of Yunan shut out all

intercourse with neighbors who might, probably enough, prove dangerous. Hitherto unexplored, and, indeed, inaccessible, this region offers a fine field for adventure and for scientific discovery. The lamented Mouhot had penetrated about five hundred miles from the mouth of the Meinam, when death arrested his career at the height of its usefulness and promise.

In this great valley of the Meinam, as on the shores of the Gulf, are to be found (according to Sir John Bowring's map) the names of the forty-one provincial stations, at each of which is resident a phaja, or functionary of the highest rank, who is responsible for the government of the adjacent territory. These districts are distributed without any great geographical exactness into five northern, nine central, ten eastern, seven western, and ten southern. A single glance at the arrangement of these districts will suffice to show that the wealth and population of the people has gathered densely about the mouth of the bountiful "mother of waters," where the least possible amount of lazy exertion will produce the greatest possible amount of the necessaries of life.

On the westward the valley or plain of the Meinam is separated from Birmah by a chain of mountains which extend from north to south for a distance of seven hundred miles and more, and run down as a kind of rocky spine into the Malayan peninsula. The inhabitants of these mountains, as also those of the mountains of the upper Meinam, are a somewhat hardier and nobler race than the

dwellers on the plain. In the western mountains are the Karen tribes, among whom the missionaries of the American churches, especially, have gained such signal successes, making the name of the Karens famous throughout the Christian world. The Laos people in the north are in their physical structure a little larger and stronger than the Siamese of the low country, and have also mental and moral qualities which give hopeful promise of advancement in civilization and religion in the new era which has dawned upon the Eastern world.

In accordance with these natural divisions and their characteristics of race and temperament, the native historians of Siam have divided their country into two regions, the northern, Mouang Nona, at first the more populous portion, and Mouang Tai, the southern, which was settled later. The traditions of the country point to the northward and westward, beyond the Himalayas, as the direction from which the stream of population descended. The chronicles of the south are sometimes called "the chronicles of the royal city," (Ayuthia,) and commence at the period when this place became the capital. It is certain that prior to this date the history is mythical and full of mere tradition, more or less untrustworthy. De Barrios, the Portuguese traveller of the fifteenth century, reports that in his time nine states were subject to the Siamese realm; but he makes two divisions only, which were peopled by the Siamese race, and in which the Siamese language was spoken. Of these the southern was the region having Ayuthia for its capital; and in the



name of the capital city of the northern region (as he gives it, Chaumua) it is not difficult to identify the name Chang Mai, by which the upper Meinam district is still called.

Eastward the valley of the Meinam is divided from the valley of the great river of Cambodia, the Mekong, by a hill country which is a spur from the mountains of Yunan. It is by no means impassable, and does not prevent the two kingdoms from being so closely united that it is often difficult to distinguish them, and to say where one leaves off and the other begins.

The Gulf of Siam, which bounds the country southward, is easily navigable and comparatively free from the destructive fury of the typhoons which sometimes make such havoc with the commerce of the Indian Ocean and the China Seas. It has, however, a peril of its own in the dangerous squalls which during the summer months come up almost unheralded and fall with brief but severe violence upon the navigator. Moreover, it is somewhat deficient in good harbors for ships of the largest tonnage. A bar at the mouth of the Meinam obliges all except the smaller vessels to find anchorage in an open roadstead from six to ten miles from the shore. And the bar is not only an obstruction to navigation but a positive peril, as the editor of this volume has abundant reason to remember. In a gale of wind the breakers are so dangerous that small boats cannot venture to cross the bar without the greatest risk of being swamped. If the bar is once crossed, however, there is deep water and easy

navigation even for ships of the largest class, into the very midst of the city of Bangkok, thirty miles from the mouth of the river. Formerly the river was navigable for a much longer distance. The ancient annals of Siam report that, in the seventh century, Chinese junks ascended the Meinam as far as Sangkhalok, which is a distance of one hundred and twenty leagues from the sea. At present the river is navigable to a distance of twenty leagues. On the eastern branch of the Meinam the rapids commence at Pak Priau, where the rowers leave the boats, and drag them, as they are able, through the rocks and foaming waters ; but they are often driven back by the impetuosity of the stream. There are about ten waterfalls within the space of seven or eight leagues, but none impassable, and during six months of the year the great floods cause them to disappear.

These great floods, the regular inundation of the Meinam, constitute the great event of the year in Siam as does the inundation of the Nile in Egypt. An area of not far from twenty thousand square miles of territory is enriched by this annual overflow, and so enriched as to make it, in fertility and productiveness, the very garden of the world. It is safe to say that no equal area on the face of the globe exceeds the valley of the Meinam in possibilities of vegetable wealth. Some of the phenomena of the great inundation have been collected and recorded by Sir John Bowring, and are of considerable interest and value. He says :

“The Meinam has its annual inundation. Impreg-

nated with the rich soil which it brings from the interior, in the month of June its waters begin to rise, and in August they overflow the banks to a height sometimes exceeding six feet above the ordinary level. In the first public audience I had with the first king, he called my attention to the inundation of the river as the main source of the fertility of the soil; the rice-fields become greener and more promising as the waters spread, which generally remain till the month of November, the land having, the appearance of a lake. Boats traverse it in all directions, temporary canals being formed among the rice-fields to facilitate their circulation. Pallegoix affirms that though the high lands are submerged for several months, the lower regions of the country, at a distance of thirty miles from the sea, are never inundated, which he attributes to the strength of the tide, which, in rising, drives back the descending waters with an irresistible force, and at the ebb they make their way by the ordinary stream to the ocean, so that they have no time to spread themselves over the adjacent lands. A failure of the inundation is perdition to a large portion of the rice-crops.

“But the country sometimes suffers fearfully from these inundations. That of 1831 nearly destroyed all the sugar plantations, and three or four feet of water continuing to cover the face of the country, almost all the cattle perished. The rice-harvest was seriously affected and the finest fruit-trees swept away, so that it was said only one durian tree was left in Siam. But fruit abounded—fruit of



INUNDATION OF THE MELNAM.









singular variety and excellence—in 1855, and the mischief of the floods appeared to be wholly repaired.

“When the waters of the Meinam are supposed to have reached their highest point, the king deposes one hundred Bonzes (Buddhist priests) who are instructed to command the inundation to proceed no further. These functionaries embark on state barges, issue the royal mandate to the waters, bidding them turn back in their course, and they accompany their intervention with exorcisms, which are sometimes ineffectual, and show that the falling of the waters is no more subject to the commands of the sovereign of Siam than were the tides on the British shores controlled by the Danish king.”

So wet a country as this ought naturally to be a good place for fish. And accordingly we find, on the authority of Bishop Pallegoix, some fish stories of an extraordinary character, which almost make credible those other stories of the steamboats on our Western rivers which can run wherever it is a little damp. Says Sir John Bowring :

“In ascending and descending the Meinam I was amused with the novel sight of fish leaving the river—gliding over the wet banks and losing themselves among the trees of the jungle. Pallegoix asserts that such fish will wander more than a league from the water. ‘Some years ago,’ I translate his words, ‘a great heat had dried up all the ponds in the neighborhood of Ayuthia; during the night torrents of rain fell. Next day, going for a walk into the country, how great was my surprise at seeing the

ponds almost full, and a quantity of fish leaping about. Whence have these fish come? I inquired of a laborer: yesterday there was not one! He said they were come under favor of the rain. In 1831, when fish were uncommonly cheap, the Bishop of Siam thought fit to buy a supply of living fish, and he poured fifty cwt. into his ponds; but in less than a month nine tenths escaped during a rain that fell in the night. There are three species of this wandering fish, called pla-xon, pla-duk, pla-mó. The first is voracious, and about the size of a carp; salted and dried, it can be preserved for a year; it is very abundant, is exported to China, Singapore and Java, and is a particularly wholesome and health-giving fish.

“The *dog's-tongue* is a fish shaped like the sole; it attaches itself to the bottom of boats, and makes a sonorous noise, which is more musical when several are stuck to the same bank and act in concert.”

“Kämpfer (one of the oldest and most authoritative of Oriental travellers,) puts forth the theory that were it not for the vast pains it would require to trace out its several channels through the forests and deserts, and to open a navigation, it might be possible for vessels to go hence from (Siam) to Bengal.” Of the Meinam he remarks that the inundations are the results of the dissolving of the snow in the mountainous regions, aided by the heavy rains; that the land water is nitrous, the river sweet and wholesome; that though the flow of water is naturally towards the sea, the inundations principally benefit the upper and middle regions; that the fertility of the soil is such that the rice grows as fast as

the water rises, and that the ripe ears are gathered by the reapers, and the straw, often of incredible length, left in the water, and that if the absence of the north wind prevent the return of the waters to their ordinary channel, there is a great creation of *malaria*, whose effects are most pernicious to the public health, and are sought to be warded off by imposing and costly religious ceremonies through the whole country."

Before dismissing the subject of the geography of Siam we ought to mention the proposal made by Sir John Bowring for a ship canal across the peninsula of Malacca at its northern end. In one place, at about the latitude  $11^{\circ}$ , the direct passage across the peninsula would be only fifty miles. If it should be found, upon investigation, that the mountain ridge, which runs through the peninsula like a back-bone, can be penetrated without too great difficulty and expense, the undertaking would be more than justified. At present in all voyages between India and Eastern Asia there is necessary a long *détour* southward through the straits of Malacca and then northward among the perilous islands of the Malayan archipelago. All this might be avoided, making a saving of days and even weeks if the canal suggested by Sir John Bowring should be practicable. It would bring Siam at once into the highway of commerce. The comparative seclusion of this rich and interesting kingdom, hitherto, has been in part owing to the fact that it was off the highway. To reach it required that one should turn aside from the great route between the opulent and populous realms of

India and China, and traverse the unknown waters of a broad gulf, ill-supplied with harbors. It is scarcely to be wondered at if Siam was forced to wait its turn till almost all the Oriental world was re-discovered; till even Japan had been brought into the fellowship of nations, before its intercourse with Western countries began to be familiar and cordial. If Bowring's scheme should prove not to be visionary, the geographical relations of Siam would instantly become exceedingly important.



## CHAPTER III.

### OLD SIAM—ITS HISTORY.

THE date at which any coherent and trustworthy history of Siam must commence, is the founding of the sacred city of Ayuthia, (the former capital of the kingdom,) in the year 1350 of the Christian era. Tradition, more or less obscure and fabulous, does indeed reach back into the remote past so far as the fifth century, B.C. According to the carefully arranged chronology of Bishop Pallegoix, gathered from the Siamese annals, which annals however are declared by his majesty, the late king, to be “all full of fable, and are not in satisfaction for believe,” the origin of the nation can be traced back, if not into indefinite space of time, at least into the vague and uncertain “woods,” and ran on this wise :

“There were two Brahminical recluses dwelling in the woods, named Sătxănalăi, and Sătthimōngkōn, coeval with Plua Khôdôm, (the Buddha,) and one hundred and fifty years of age, who having called their numerous posterity together, counselled them to build a city having seven walls, and then

departed to the woods to pass their lives as hermits.

“But their posterity, under the leadership of Bathāmārāt, erected the city Sāvānthē vālōk, or Sangkhālōk, about the year 300 of the era of Phra Khôdôm, (B.C. about 243.)

“Bathāmārāt founded three other cities, over which he placed his three sons. The first he appointed ruler in the city of Hārīpunxāi, the second in Kamphôxā nākhn, the third in Phētxābun. These four sovereignties enjoyed, for five hundred years or more, the uttermost peace and harmony under the rule of the monarchs of this dynasty.”

The places named in this chronicle are all in the valley of the upper Meinam, in the “north country,” and the fact of most historical value which the chronicle indicates is that the Siamese came from the north and from the west, bringing with them the government and the religion which they still possess. The most conspicuous personage in these ancient annals is one Phra Ruàng, “whose advent and glorious reign had been announced by a communication from Gandama himself, and who possessed, in consequence of his merits, a white elephant with black tusks,” he introduced the Thai alphabet, ordained a new era which is still in vogue, married the daughter of the emperor of China, and consolidated the petty principedoms of the north country into one sovereignty. His birth was fabulous and his departure from the world mysterious. He is the mythic author of the Siamese History. Born of a queen of the Nakhae, (a fabulous race

dwelling under the earth,) who came in the way of his father, the King of Hārīpunxāi, one day when the king had “retired to a mountain for the purpose of meditation, he was discovered accidentally by a huntsman, and was recognized by the royal ring which his father had given to the lady from the underworld. When he had grown up, he entered the court of his father, and the palace trembled. He was acknowledged as the heir, and his great career proceeded with uninterrupted glory. At last he went one day to the river and disappeared.” It was thought he had rejoined his mother, the Queen of the Nakhae, and would pass the remainder of his life in the realms beneath. The date of Phra Ruàng’s reign is given as the middle of the fifth century of the Christian era.

After him, there came successive dynasties of kings, ending with Phăja Uthong, who reigned seven years in northern Cambodia, but being driven from his kingdom by a severe pestilence, or having voluntarily abandoned it, (as another account asserts,) in consequence of explorations which had discovered “the southern country,” and found it extremely fertile and abundant in fish, he emigrated with his people and arrived at a certain island in the Meinam, where he “founded a new city, Krŭng thèph mǎhá năkhon Síajŭthăja—a great town impregnable against angels : Siamese era 711, A.D. 1349.”

Here, at last, we touch firm historic ground, although there is still in the annals a sufficient admixture of what the late king happily designates

as "feable." The foundations of Ayuthia, the new city, were laid with extraordinary care. The soothsayers were consulted, and decided that "in the 712th year of the Siamese era, on the sixth day of the waning moon, the fifth month, at ten minutes before four o'clock, the foundation should be laid. Three palaces were erected in honor of the king; and vast countries, among which were Malacca, Tennasserim, Java, and many others whose position cannot now be defined, were claimed as tributary states." King Uthong assumed the title Phra-Rama-thi-bodi, and after a reign of about twenty years in his new capital handed down to his son and to a long line of successors, a large, opulent, and consolidated realm. The word Phra, which appears in his title and in that of almost all his successors to the present day, is said by Sir John Bowring to be "probably either derived from or of common origin with the Pharaoh of antiquity." But the resemblance between the words is simply accidental, and the connection which he seeks to establish is not for a moment to be admitted.

His majesty the late king of Siam, a man of remarkable character and history, was probably, while he lived, the best informed authority on all matters relating to the history of his kingdom. Fortunately, being a man of scholarly habits and literary tastes, he has left on record a concise and readable historical sketch, from which we cannot do better than to make large quotations, supplementing it when necessary with details gathered



from other sources. The narrative begins with the foundation of the royal city Ayuthia, of which an account has already been given on a previous page. The method of writing the proper names is that adopted by the king himself, who was exact, even to a pedantic extent, in regard to such matters. The king's English, however, which was often droll and sometimes unintelligible, has in this instance been corrected by the missionary under whose auspices the sketch was first published.

“ Ayuthia when founded was gradually improved and became more and more populous by natural increase, and the settlement there of families of Laos, Kambujans, Peguans, people from Yunnán in China, who had been brought there as captives, and by Chinese and Mussulmans from India, who came for the purposes of trade. Here reigned fifteen kings of one dynasty, successors of and belonging to the family of U-T'ong Rámá-thi-bodi, who, after his death, was honorably designated as Phra Chetha Bida—*i. e.* ‘Royal Elder Brother Father.’ This line was interrupted by one interloping usurper between the thirteenth and fourteenth. The last king was Mahíntrá-thi-rát. During his reign the renowned king of Pegu, named Chamna-dischop, gathered an immense army, con-

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\* No attempt at uniformity in this respect has been made by the editor of this volume ; but, in passages quoted from different authors, the proper names are written and accented according to the various methods of those authors.

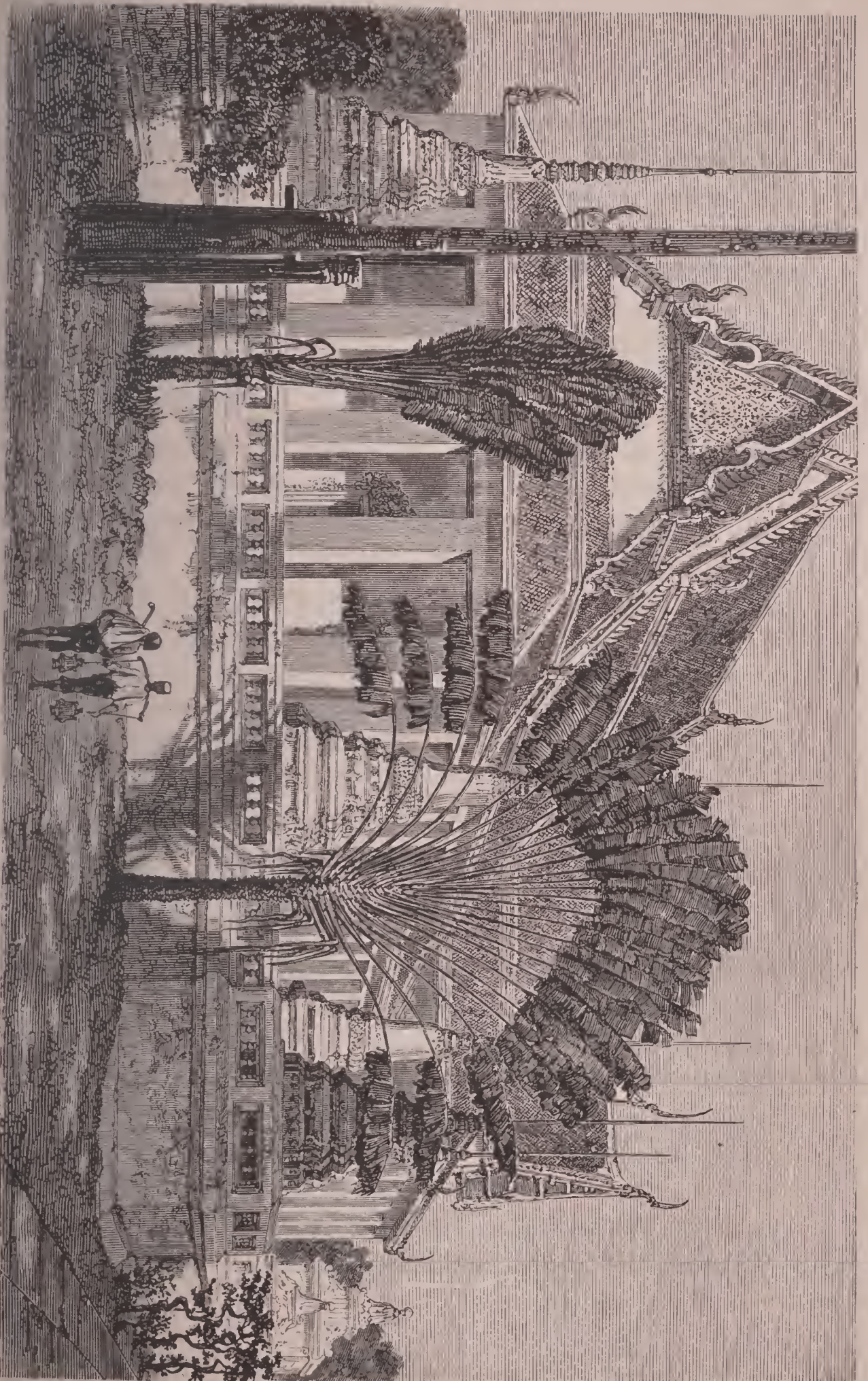
sisting of Peguans, Birmese, and inhabitants of northern Siam, and made an attack upon Ayuthia. The ruler of northern Siam was Mahá-thamma rájá related to the fourteenth king as son-in-law, and to the last as brother-in-law.

“After a siege of three months the Peguans took Ayuthia, but did not destroy it or its inhabitants, the Peguan monarch contenting himself with capturing the king and royal family, to take with him as trophies to Pegu, and delivered the country over to be governed by Mahá-thamma rájá, as a dependency. The King of Pegu also took back with him the oldest son of Mahá-thamma rájá as a hostage: his name was Phra Náret. This conquest of Ayuthia by the king of Pegu took place A. D. 1556.

“This state of dependence and tribute continued but a few years. The king of Pegu died, and in the confusion incident to the elevation of his son as successor, Prince Náret escaped with his family, and, attended by many Peguans of influence, commenced his return to his native land. The new king, on hearing of his escape, despatched an army to seize and bring him back. They followed him till he had crossed the Si-thong (Birman Sit-thaung) River, where he turned against the Peguan army, shot the commander, who fell from his elephant dead, and then proceeded in safety to Ayuthia.

“War with Pegu followed, and Siam again became independent. On the demise of Mahá-thamma rájá, Prince Náret succeeded to the throne,





PAGODA AT AYUTTHIA







and became one of the mightiest and most renowned rulers Siam ever had. In his wars with Pegu, he was accompanied by his younger brother, Eká-tassa-rot, who succeeded Náret on the throne, but on account of mental derangement was soon removed, and Phra-Siri Sin Ni-mon-tham was called by the nobles from the priesthood to the throne."

With the accession of this last-mentioned sovereign begins a new dynasty. But before reproducing the chronicles of it, we may add a few words concerning that which preceded.

This dynasty had lasted from the founding of Ayuthia, A. D. 1350, until A. D. 1602, a period of two hundred years. Its record shows, on the whole, a remarkable regularity of succession, with perhaps no more intrigues, illegitimacies, murders, and assassinations than are to be found in the records of Christian dynasties. Temples and palaces were built, and among other works a gold image of Buddha is said to have been cast, (in the city of Pichai, in the year A. D. 1380,) "which weighed fifty-three thousand catties, or one hundred and forty-one thousand pounds, which would represent the almost incredible value (at seventy shillings per ounce) of nearly six millions sterling. The gold for the garments weighed two hundred and eighty-six catties." Another great image of Buddha, in a sitting posture, was cast from gold, silver, and copper, the height of which was fifty cubits.

One curious tradition is on record, the date of which is at the beginning of the 15th century.

On the death of King Intharaxa, the sixth of the dynasty, his two eldest sons, who were rulers of smaller provinces, hastened, each one from his home, to seize their father's vacant throne. Mounted on elephants, they hastened to Ayuthia, and by strange chance arrived at the same moment at a bridge, crossing in opposite directions. The princes were at no loss to understand the motive each of his brother's journey. A contest ensued upon the bridge—a contest so furious and desperate that both fell, killed by each other's hands. One result of this tragedy was to make easy the way of the youngest and surviving brother, who, coming by an undisputed title to the throne, reigned long and prosperously.

During some of the wars between Pegu and Siam, the hostile kings availed themselves of the services of Portuguese who had begun, by the middle of the sixteenth century, to settle in considerable numbers in both kingdoms. And there are still extant the narratives of several historians, who describe with characteristic pomposity and extravagance, the magnificence of the military operations in which they bore a part. One of these wars seems to have originated in the jealousy of the king of Pegu, who had learned, to his great disgust, that his neighbor of Siam was the fortunate possessor of no less than seven white elephants, and was prospering mightily in consequence. Accordingly he sent an embassy of five hundred persons to request that two of the seven sacred beasts might be transferred as a mark of honor to himself. After some diplomacy the

Siamese king declined—not that he loved his neighbor of Pegu less—but that he loved the elephants more, and that the Peguans were (as they had themselves acknowledged) uninstructed in the management of white elephants, and had, on a former occasion, almost been the death of two of the animals of which they had been the owners, and had been obliged to send them to Siam to save their lives. The king of Pegu, however, was so far from regarding this excuse as satisfactory, that he waged furious and victorious war, and carried off not two but four of the white elephants which had been the *casus belli*. It seems to have been in a campaign about this time that, when the king of Siam was disabled by the ignominious flight of the war elephant on which he was mounted, his queen, “clad in the royal robes, with manly spirit fights in her husband’s stead, until she expires on her elephant from the loss of an arm.”

It is related of the illustrious Phra Náret, of whom the royal author, in the passage quoted on a previous page, speaks with so much admiration, that being greatly offended by the perfidious conduct of his neighbor, the king of Cambodia, he bound himself by an oath to wash his feet in the blood of that monarch. “So, immediately on finding himself freed from other enemies, he assailed Cambodia, and besieged the royal city of Lăvík, having captured which, he ordered the king to be slain, and his blood having been collected in a golden ewer, he washed his feet therein, in the presence of his courtiers, amid the clang of trumpets.”



The founder of the second dynasty is famous in Siamese history, as the king in whose reign was discovered and consecrated the celebrated footstep of Buddha, Phra Bât, at the base of a famous mountain to the eastward of Ayuthia. Concerning him the late king, in his historical sketch, remarks :

“ He had been very popular as a learned and religious teacher, and commanded the respect of all the public counsellors ; but he was not of the royal family. His coronation took place A. D. 1602. There had preceded him a race of nineteen kings, excepting one usurper. The new king submitted all authority in government to a descendant of the former line of kings, and to him also he intrusted his sons for education, reposing confidence in him as capable of maintaining the royal authority over all the tributary provinces. This officer thus became possessed of the highest dignity and power. His master had been raised to the throne at an advanced age. During the twenty-six years he was on the throne he had three sons, born under the royal canopy—*i. e.* the great white umbrella, one of the insignia of royalty.

“ After the demise of the king, at an extreme old age, the personage whom he had appointed as regent, in full council of the nobles, raised his eldest son, then sixteen years old, to the throne. A short time after, the regent caused the second son to be slain, under the pretext of a rebellion against his elder brother. Those who were envious of the regent, excited the king to revenge his brother’s death as causeless, and plan the regent’s assassination ;



but he, being seasonably apprised of it, called a council of the nobles and dethroned him after one year's reign, and then raised his youngest brother, the third son, to the throne.

“He was only eleven years old. His extreme youth and fondness for play, rather than politics or government, soon created discontent. Men of office saw that it was exposing their country to contempt, and sought for some one who might fill the place with dignity. The regent was long accustomed to all the duties of the government, and had enjoyed the confidence of their late venerable king ; so, with one voice, the child was dethroned and the regent exalted under the title of Phra Chau Pra Satb-thong. This event occurred A. D. 1630,” and forms the commencement of the third dynasty.

“The king was said to have been connected with the former dynasty, both paternally and maternally ; but the connection must have been quite remote and obscure. Under the reign of the priest-king he bore the title Raja Suriwong, as indicating a remote connection with the royal family. From him descended a line of ten kings, who reigned at Ayuthia and Lophaburi—Louvô of French writers. This line was once interrupted by an usurper between the fourth and fifth reigns. This usurper was the foster-father of an unacknowledged though real son of the fourth king, Chau Nárái. During his reign many European merchants established themselves and their trade in the country, among whom was Constantine Phaulkon (Faulkon). He became a great favorite through his skill in business, his sug-

gestions and superintendence of public works after European models, and by his presents of many articles regarded by the people of those days as great curiosities, such as telescopes, etc.

“King Nárái, the most distinguished of all Siamese rulers, before or since, being highly pleased with the services of Constantine, conferred on him the title of Chau Phya Wicha-yentrá-thé-bodi, under which title there devolved on him the management of the government in all the northern provinces of the country. He suggested to the king the plan of erecting a fort on European principles as a protection to the capital. This was so acceptable a proposal, that at the king’s direction he was authorized to select the location and construct the fort.

“He selected a territory which was then employed as garden-ground, but is now the territory of Bangkok. On the west bank, near the mouth of a canal, now called Báng-luang, he constructed a fort, which bears the name of Wichayeiw Fort to this day. It is close to the residence of his Royal Highness Chau fá-noi Kromma Khun Isaret rangsan. This fort and circumjacent territory was called Thana-buri. A wall was erected, enclosing a space of about 100 yards square. Another fort was built on the east side of the river, where the walled city of Bangkok now stands. The ancient name Bángkôk was in use when the whole region was a garden.\*

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\* Such names abound now, as Bang-cha, Bang-phra, Bang-pla-soi, etc.; *Bang* signifying a small stream or canal, such as is seen in gardens.

The above-mentioned fort was erected about the year A. D. 1675.

“This extraordinary European also induced his grateful sovereign king Nárái to repair the old city of Lopha-buri, (Louvô,) and construct there an extensive royal palace on the principles of European architecture. On the north of this palace Constantine erected an extensive and beautiful collection of buildings for his own residence. Here also he built a Romish church, on which are still to be seen some inscriptions in European letters, supposed to be Dutch or German; they assuredly are neither French nor English (perhaps they are Greek, as he was of Greek extraction, and born at Cephalonia). The ruins of all these edifices and their walls are still to be seen, and are said to be a great curiosity. It is moreover stated that he planned the construction of canals, with reservoirs at intervals for bringing water from the mountains on the northeast to the city Lopha-buri, and conveying it through earthen and copper pipes and siphons, so as to supply the city in the dry season on the same principle as that adopted in Europe. He commenced also a canal, with embankments, to the holy place called Phra-Bat, about twenty-five miles southwest from the city. He made an artificial pond on the summit of Phra-Bat mountain, and thence, by means of copper tubes and stop-cocks, conveyed abundance of water to the kitchen and bath-rooms of the royal residence at the foot of the mountain. His works were not completed when misfortune overtook him.



“Many Siamese officers and royal ministers were jealous of his influence, and murmured their suspicions of his being a secret rebel. At length he was accused of designing to put the king to death by inviting him to visit the church he had built, between the walls of which, it is said, he had inserted a quantity of gunpowder, which was to be ignited by a match at a given signal, and thus involve the death of the king. On this serious charge he was assassinated by private order of the king. (This is the traditional story; the written annals state that he was slain in his sedan while faithful to his king, by order of a rebel prince, who perceived he could not succeed in his nefarious plans against the throne while Constantine lived.) The works which he left half done are now generally in ruins, viz. the canal to Phra-Bat and the aqueduct at the mountains.

“After the demise of Nárái, his unacknowledged son, born of a princess of Yunnan or Chiang-Mai, and intrusted for training to the care of Phya Petcha raja, slew Nárái’s son and heir, and constituted his foster-father king, himself acting as prime minister till the death of his foster-father, fifteen years after; he then assumed the royal state himself. He is ordinarily spoken of as Nai Dua. Two of his sons and two of his grandsons subsequently reigned at Ayuthia. The youngest of these grandsons reigned only a short time, and then surrendered the royal authority to his brother and entered the priesthood. While this brother reigned, in the year 1759, the Birman king, Meng-luang Alaung Barah-gyi, came with an immense army, marching in three divisions on as



many distinct routes, and combined at last in the siege of Ayuthia.

“The Siamese king, Chaufa Ekadwat Anurak Moutri, made no resolute effort of resistance. His great officers disagreed in their measures. The inhabitants of all the smaller towns were indeed called behind the walls of the city, and ordered to defend it to their utmost ability; but jealousy and dissension rendered all their bravery useless. Sallies and skirmishes were frequent, in which the Birmese were generally the victorious party. The siege was continued for two years. The Birmese commander-in-chief, Mahá Nōratha, died, but his principal officers elected another in his place. At the end of the two years, the Birmese, favored by the dry season, when the waters were shallow, crossed in safety, battered the walls, broke down the gates, and entered without resistance. The provisions of the Siamese were exhausted, confusion reigned, and the Birmese fired the city and public buildings. The king, badly wounded, escaped with his flying subjects, but soon died alone of his wounds and his sorrows. He was subsequently discovered and buried.

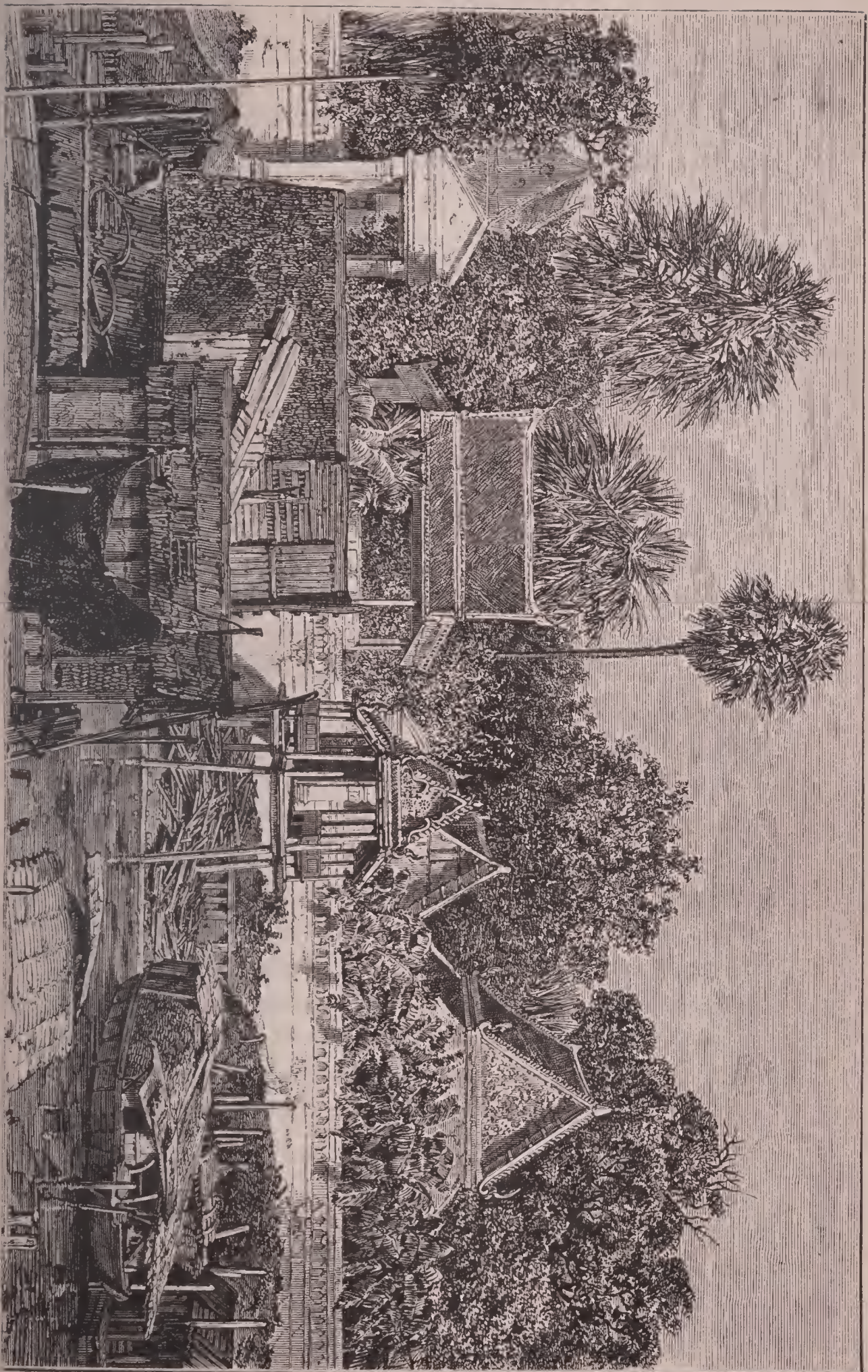
“His brother, who was in the priesthood, and now the most important personage in the country, was captured by the Birmans, to be conveyed in triumph to Birmah. They perceived that the country was too remote from their own to be governed by them; they therefore freely plundered the inhabitants, beating, wounding and even killing many families, to induce them to disclose treasures which they supposed were hidden by them. By these measures

the Birinese officers enriched themselves with most of the wealth of the country. After two or three months spent in plunder, they appointed a person of Mon or Peguan origin as ruler over Siam, and withdrew with numerous captives, leaving this Peguan officer to gather fugitives and property to convey to Birmah at some subsequent opportunity. This officer was named Phrá Nái Kong, and made his headquarters about three miles north of the city, at a place called Phō Sam-ton, *i. e.*, ‘the three Sacred Fig-trees.’ One account relates that the last king mentioned above, when he fled from the city, wounded, was apprehended by a party of travellers and brought into the presence of Phrá Nái Kong in a state of great exhaustion and illness; that he was kindly received and respectfully treated, as though he was still the sovereign, and that Phrá Nái Kong promised to confirm him again as a ruler of Siam, but his strength failed and he died a few days after his apprehension.

“The conquest by Birmah, the destruction of Ayuthia, and appointment of Phrá Nái Kong took place in March, A.D. 1767. This date is unquestionable. The period between the foundation of Ayuthia and its overthrow by the Birmans embraces 417 years, during which there were thirty-three kings of three distinct dynasties, of which the first dynasty had nineteen kings with one usurper; the second had three kings, and the third had nine kings and one usurper.

“When Ayuthia was conquered by the Birinese, in March, 1767, there remained in the country many





VIEW TAKEN FROM THE CANAL OF AYUTTHIA







bands of robbers associated under brave men as their leaders. These parties had continued their depredations since the first appearance of the Birman army, and during about two years had lived by plundering the quiet inhabitants, having no government to fear. On the return of the Birman troops to their own country, these parties of robbers had various skirmishes with each other during the year 1767.

“The first king established at Bangkok was an extraordinary man, of Chinese origin, named Pin Tat. He was called by the Chinese, Tia Sin Tat, or Tuat. He was born at a village called Bánták, in Northern Siam, in lat. 16° N. The date of his birth was in March, 1734. At the capture of Ayuthia he was thirty-three years old. Previous to that time he had obtained the office of second governor of his own township, Tak, and he next obtained the office of governor of his own town, under the dignified title of Phyá Ták, which name he bears to the present day. During the reign of the last king of Ayuthia, he was promoted to the office and dignity of governor of the city of Kam-Cheng-philet, which from times of antiquity was called the capital of the western province of Northern Siam. He obtained this office by bribing the high minister of the king, Chaufá Ekadwat Anurak Moutri; and being a brave warrior, he was called to Ayuthia on the arrival of the Birman troops as a member of the council. But when sent to resist the Birman troops, who were harassing the eastern side of the city, perceiving that the Ayuthian government was unable to resist the

enemy, he, with his followers, fled to Chautaburi, (Chautabun,) a town on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Siam, in lat.  $12\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  N. and long.  $101^{\circ} 21'$  E. There he united with many brave men, who were robbers and pirates, and subsisted by robbing the villages and merchant-vessels. In this way he became the great military leader of the district, and had a force of more than ten thousand men. He soon formed a treaty of peace with the headman of Bángplásoi, a district on the north, and with Kam-buja and Annam (or Cochin China) on the south-east."

With the fall of Ayuthia and the disasters inflicted by the Birman army ended the third dynasty in the year 1767. So complete was the victory of the Birmese, and so utter the overthrow of the kingdom of Siam, that it was only after some years of disorder and partial lawlessness that the realm became reorganized under strong centralized authority. The great military leader, to whom the royal chronicle from which we have been quoting refers, seems to have been pre-eminently the man for the hour. By his patient sagacity, joined with bravery and qualities of leadership which are not often found in the annals of Oriental warfare, he succeeded in expelling the Birmese from the capital, and in reconquering the provinces which, during the period of anarchy consequent on the Birmese invasion had asserted separate sovereignty and independence. The war which about this time broke out between Birmah and China made this task of throwing off the foreign yoke more

easy. And his own good sense and judicious admixture of mildness with severity conciliated and settled the disturbed and disorganized provinces. Notably was this the case in the province of Ligor, on the peninsula, where an alliance with the beautiful daughter of the captive king, and presently the birth of a son from the princess, made it easy to attach the government of that province, (and incidentally of the adjoining provinces,) by ties of the strongest allegiance to the new dynasty.

Joined with Phya Tá, in his adventures and successes as his confidential friend and helper, was a man of noble birth and vigorous character, who was, indeed, scarcely the inferior of the great general in ability. This man, closely associated with Phya Tá, became at last his successor. For, at the close of his career, and after his great work of reconstructing the kingdom was fully accomplished, Phya Tá became insane. The bonzes, (or priests of Buddha,) notwithstanding all that he had done to enrich the temples of the new capital, (especially in bringing from Laos "the emerald Buddha which is the pride and glory of Bangkok at the present day,") turned against him, declaring that he aspired to the divine honor of Buddha himself. His exactions of money from his rich subjects, and his deeds of cruelty and arbitrary power towards all classes became so intolerable, that a revolt took place in the city, and the king fled for safety to a neighboring pagoda, and declared himself a member of the priesthood. For a while his refuge in the mo-

nastery availed to save his life. But presently his favorite general, either in response to an invitation from the nobles, or else prompted by his own ambition, assumed the sovereignty and put his friend and predecessor to a violent death. The accession of the new king, (who seems to have shared the dignity and responsibility of government with his brother,) was the commencement of the present dynasty, to the history of which a new chapter may properly be devoted. But before proceeding with the history, we interrupt the narrative to give in greater detail a strange and romantic episode, to which allusion has been already made, in the story of Constantine Phaulcon.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE STORY OF CONSTANTINE PHAULCON.

THE sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the era of geographical discovery and exploration, were the golden age of adventurers. But probably among all who either successfully or unsuccessfully sought their fortune in the new realms of the remote East or of the West there was none whose story is so full of interest, exhibiting such vicissitudes of experience, such depths of misfortunes, such heights of success, as does the story of the Greek adventurer Constantine Phaulcon. Stripping it of all the extravagant embellishments with which the devout priest who wrote his biography has adorned it,—and questioning, as we fairly may, whether the odor of sanctity which the good father attributes to him is fully his right,—the story is still remarkable enough to deserve a conspicuous place in the annals of travel, exploration, and adventure. It reads rather like some chapter from the Arabian Nights, and reminds us of the voyages of Sinbad and his fellows, rather than the sober fact of well authenticated his-

tory. For the details of the narrative we are indebted to the French work, *Histoire de M. Constance*, (as he is frequently called,) *par le Père d'Orléans*, a Jesuit. The account was printed at Tours, in 1690, and was translated by Sir John Bowring, and given in the appendix of his own work on Siam.

“Constantine Falcon, so well known under the name of M. Constance, was of Venetian origin, but born in Greece, his father being the son of a governor of Cephalonia, his mother a native of that island and of an ancient and honorable family. His parents were unfortunate or unskillful, and their nobility weighed heavily upon their poverty.

“M. Constance was scarcely ten years old when he became aware of his unfortunate condition and felt it keenly. He did not, however, lose time in lamentations, but with a courage above his years, he formed the resolution of endeavoring to raise himself; and, that no time might be lost, he determined to leave his native land where he foresaw that he should meet with many obstacles to his advancement. As commerce attracts to Cephalonia many English merchants, the young Constance joined a captain of that nation and accompanied him to England. A short time after, he embarked for the Indies in one of the vessels of the East India Company, in whose service he engaged.

“He arrived in Siam” holding as Kämpfer tells us, the office of coxswain on board the vessel

to which he belonged, "and after several years' service, weary of continuing a subaltern, he purchased a ship, and, full of the courage which never forsook him, he put to sea in order to trade with the neighboring kingdoms.

"Two shipwrecks rapidly following one another, at the mouth of the Siam River," where the dangerous bar continues to the present day to make navigation perilous, "would have discouraged any other person, and a third, upon the coast of Malabar, would have made him despair, had he been of a less steadfast and determined spirit. He had nearly lost his life, and of all his possessions only two thousand crowns remained to him.

"Cast upon shore with this wreck of his fortune, he found himself so much fatigued that he laid himself down to sleep. He has often related that at this moment he saw (whether in a dream he cannot tell, since he has never felt sure whether he was waking or sleeping) a person of a remarkable countenance and majestic air, who, smiling, upon him, desired him to return whence he came. These words, which he heard or supposed himself to have heard, long dwelt upon his mind; and as he had lain down at the approach of night, he passed the whole of it in reflecting upon what had just happened.

Continuing his reveries in the morning, he walked up and down by the water's edge. He perceived in the distance a man rapidly approaching him. He had no difficulty in discovering that it was a traveller who, like himself, had escaped from ship-



wreck ; his pale countenance and dripping garments sufficiently testified to the fact. The resemblance of their several fates made each impatient to approach and become acquainted with the other. The difference of language might have proved an obstacle ; but at the first words of the stranger M. Constance recognized the Siamese tongue, in which he immediately replied. Thus they found in their misfortune the consolation of being able to speak of it, and at length another consequence ensued.

“ The unknown was an ambassador whom the king of Siam had sent to Persia, and who on the way homeward had been shipwrecked in the same place as M. Constance. If the latter had been one of those who find consolation for their own troubles in those of another, he might have been comforted in seeing a man worse off than himself, the ambassador having saved only his own life, of all that he had on board his ship ; and among the sentiments of pity inspired by so melancholy a condition, M. Constance had the pleasure, even in his own misfortunes, of assisting an unhappy man. He did not wait to be asked to do what he could, but immediately offered to take him back to Siam ; and this offer being accepted by the ambassador, he expended the two thousand crowns which were left him in the purchase of a barque, provisions, and raiment for himself and his companion.

“ Now that they had no longer anything to lose, their navigation was prosperous : they reached Ayuthia without any unlucky *contretemps* and had

there the pleasure of relating their adventures—the ambassador to his relations, and M. Constance to his friends.

“The Siamese was not ungrateful for the assistance he had received from the Greek. He had no sooner rendered an account of his negotiations to the *Baraclan* (prime minister) than he mentioned his benefactor, and spoke in detail of the obligations he owed him. He praised him so warmly that this minister, who was himself an intelligent man, and admired what was good in others, was desirous of making his acquaintance, and at the first interview was so much delighted with him that he determined to make use of him. After a time, having seen much of his skill in business, and of his great probity, he felt it was desirable that the King should have such a man about him.

“The late King of Siam was, by the admission of all who travelled in the Indies, one of the most enlightened princes of the East, who quickly penetrated into character, and had the greatest regard for intelligence. His prime minister, for whom he had much respect, had spoken so highly of M. Constance as to give a very favorable impression of him; but having more than once occasion to prove his real value and capability, the esteem in which he already held him was greatly increased.

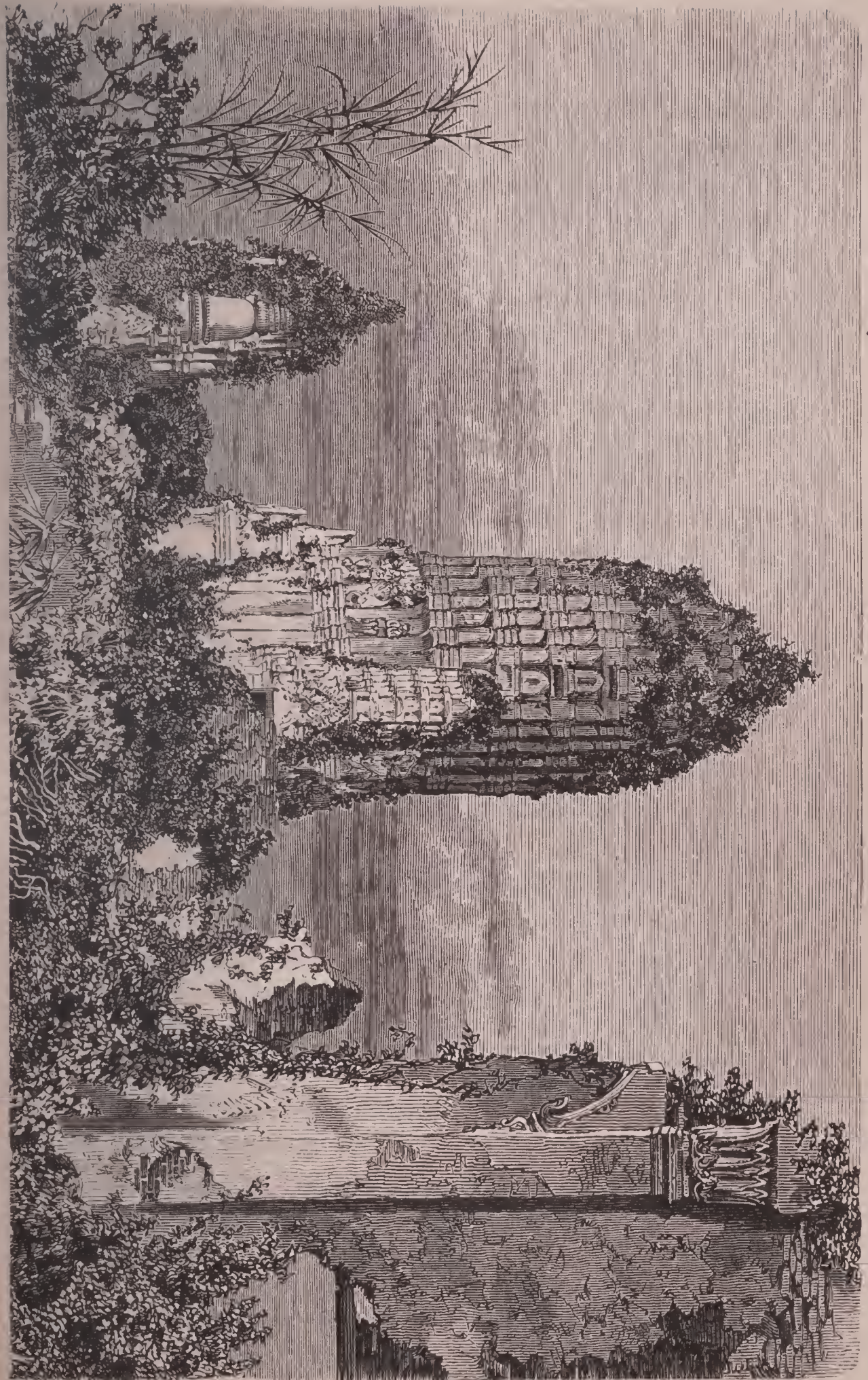
“It is said that M. Constance was first taken into favor from the address with which he supplanted the Moors in the employment, which seemed to have been made over to them, of preparing such things as were necessary for the magnificent enter-

tainment of embassies, on which the King greatly piqued himself. The enormous sums drawn from the treasury by these infidels having astonished the sovereign, M. Constance undertook the office, and succeeded in arranging everything in much more splendid style, at far less expense. It is reported that the Moors having presented a memorial setting forth that the king owed them a large sum of money for advances they had made, M. Constance, who examined their accounts, made it evident that, on the contrary, they owed his majesty more than sixty thousand crowns, as they were themselves obliged to acknowledge. The king of Siam economized, that he might spend on fit occasions ; and he was so well pleased with the judicious saving of M. Constance, as to make use of his services in other and more difficult affairs.

“His credit became so great that the highest mandarins paid court to him ; but his prosperity was interrupted by severe illness, which had nearly carried him off. For a time this was concealed from the king, probably to avoid distressing him ; but he expressed great regret at this instance of discretion, and gave his physicians so strict an order to do everything in their power for the recovery of their patient, that he was soon out of danger.

“M. Constance was born of Catholic parents ; but the education he had received among the English during ten years of his life had insensibly caused him to embrace the Anglican faith, in which he had continued up to this time.”









Just at this time, however, a Flemish Jesuit, Father Antoine Thomas, passing through Siam on his way to join the Portuguese missions in Japan and China, and seeing the opportunity of great religious and political achievements to be secured by the conversion of so powerful a man to the Roman Catholic Church, "adroitly," as the narrative states, led the way to controversial points and interested his proposed convert in the schemes with which his own mind was filled. The sickness which had well-nigh proved fatal to Phaulcon was turned to good account by the Jesuit; and the fear of dying out of the pale of the true church was dexterously employed. And at last the zealous Father Thomas had the satisfaction of receiving from Phaulcon abjuration of his errors and heresies and numbering him among the faithful. By the advice of Father Thomas, also, who, though himself of necessity a celibate, had great confidence in the sacrament of marriage as a means of grace for others, "he married, a few days after, a young Japanese lady of good family, distinguished not only by rank but also by the blood of the martyrs from whom she was descended, and whose virtues she imitates. He ever lived with his noble partner in such peace and harmony as might be a model to all who are united by the sacrament of marriage. The king and all his nobles offered him congratulations and handsome presents, and the Catholics testified great pleasure on the occasion.

"The course of M. Constance's prosperity was so rapid, that the *Baraclan* dying, the king wished to bestow upon him the vacant office, which is the



highest in the State. He, however, prudently excused himself, fearing, in the dawn of his prosperity, to excite the jealousy of the mandarins ; but though refusing the position, he fulfilled nearly all the duties connected with it ; for every affair of importance was referred to him, and the king had such entire confidence in him that he was the channel of all the requests of the people and of all the favors of the sovereign.

“ If, as a man of talent, he knew how to avail himself of the royal favor to establish his own fortune, he used it no less faithfully for the glory of his master and the good of the State ; still more, as a true Christian, for the advancement of religion. Up to this time he had aimed chiefly to increase commerce, which occupies the attention of Oriental sovereigns far more than politics, and had succeeded so well that the king of Siam was now one of the richest monarchs of Asia ; but he considered that, having enriched, he should now endeavor to render his sovereign illustrious, by making known to foreign nations the noble qualities which distinguished him ; and his chief aim being the establishment of Christianity in Siam, he resolved to engage his master to form treaties of friendship with those European monarchs who were most capable of advancing this object.”

It was not long before Phaulcon, in the influential position which he occupied as, practically, the chief minister of State, was able to induce the king of Siam to send an embassy requesting relations of more intimate friendship with the king of France,

whose greatness and glory had been represented in the most favorable light. According to the Jesuit biographer the chief aim of Phaulcon in his diplomacy was the good of the church and the conversion of the heathen king and of his people to the true faith. According to old Kämpfer, who seems an honest and matter of fact chronicler as far as his ability extends, Phaulcon was aware that his tenure of authority was insecure, and that, all the more because he had risen to so high a position was he liable to fall from it. The better to secure himself in this authority, therefore, says Kämpfer, "he thought it necessary to secure it by some foreign power, of which he judged the French nation to be the most proper for seconding his designs, which appeared even to aim at the royal dignity. In order to do this, he made his sovereign believe that by the assistance of the said nation, he might polish his subjects and put his dominion into a flourishing condition."

Under whatever motive or combination of motives he acted, it is certain that Phaulcon carried his point, and an embassy was sent to the court of Louis XIV. and a cordial response received. The Chevalier de Chaumont was sent out as the bearer of royal gifts and letters, accompanied by a considerable retinue. He arrived with his two ships of war at the bar of the Meinnam on the 24th of September, 1685, and the story of his reception by the king and court of Siam is so like the narrative of similar ceremonies in our own day that to quote the description of it would be to anticipate what will be more fully given

in another chapter. It is enough to say that the shipwrecked adventurer, who had risen from the petty office of coxswain on board an English vessel to the post of prime minister of a rich and powerful kingdom, found himself receiving on terms of equality and in a style of splendor and magnificence which even to European eyes appeared admirable, the ambassador of the most illustrious king in Europe. Whether his loyalty to the sovereign whom he was bound to serve was always quite free from intrigue and subservience to the French king is more than doubtful. And he seconded the appeal of the ambassador to Phra Narai to become a convert to the church of Rome, with such energy and zeal as won for him the warmest commendation of M. de Chaumont, who was surprised that "an unlearned man who, from the age of ten, had been continually occupied in commerce and business," should have managed the case so well. "I could not but assure him," says the Chevalier, without fearing to flatter, that "the most consummate theologian could not have given a more satisfactory answer to the king's objections." Those objections however were insurmountable, and the king refused to be converted to the church of the Jesuits or to their political plans and purposes.

Phaulcon "had long thought," says Père d'Orléans, "of bringing to Siam Jesuits who, like those in China, might introduce the Gospel at Court through the mathematical sciences, especially astronomy. Six Jesuits, having profited by so good an occasion as that of the embassy of the Chevalier de



Chaumont, to come to Siam, whence they were to proceed to China, M. Constance had no sooner seen them than he resolved to beg that some might be sent to him from France; and it was for this especial object that Father Tachard, one of the six who had accompanied M. de Chaumont, and in whom M. Constance had especial confidence, was requested to return to Europe.

“While the enlightened zeal of M. Constance caused him to take these measures for establishing religion in Siam, his policy, no less wise, led him to devise others for adding to the glory and security of the king, his master. This distinguished minister was well aware that the sovereign could not favor the Christian religion without drawing upon himself and his family two classes of dangerous enemies—the *talapoins*, with those of the Siamese who were zealous for their pagodas, or who wished to appear so, and the Mohammedans, who hoped to induce the king to embrace the Koran, which an ambassador from Persia had just brought over to Siam.

“It was to propose to the king of France the plan which he had conceived, that M. Constance arranged the embassy of the three mandarins who arrived in France with M. de Chaumont in 1686. The approbation shown by his majesty of the project of his minister, and all that he did to facilitate its execution, show how well he thought of it. The principal article of the treaty was, that the king should send over some French troops to the king of Siam, not only to instruct his own in our discipline, but also to be at his disposal according as he should need them

for the security of his person, or for that of his kingdom. In the mean time, the king of Siam would appoint the French soldiers to guard two places, where they would be commanded by their own officers, under the authority of this monarch.

“After the treaty was ratified, the troops assembled and the twelve missionaries chosen, everything being in readiness for the return of the ambassadors of the king of Siam, they set out on the expedition of 1686, an account of which Father Tachard has given to the public, with remarks as full and as interesting as those which accompanied his report of the first voyage.

“The Mohammedans had long flattered themselves with the hope of inducing the king and people of Siam to accept the Koran; but when they saw the monarch thus closely allying himself with Christians, their fears were excited; and the great difference which had been made between the French and Persian ambassadors, in the honors shown them in their audiences with his majesty, had so much increased the apprehensions of the infidels that they resolved to avert the apprehended misfortune by attempting the life of the king. The authors of this evil design were two princes of Champa and a prince of Macassar, all of them refugees in Siam, where the king had offered them an asylum against some powerful enemies of their own countries. A Malay captain encouraged them by prophecies which he circulated among the zealots of his own sect, of whom he shortly assembled a sufficient number to carry out the conspiracy, had it not been discovered; which,

however, it was, though the princes of Champa, who, having a brother in the service of the king, and at that moment with the court at Louvô, forwarded to him a letter of warning, but so *mal-à-propos*, and in so strange a manner, that, suspecting something wrong, though he knew not what, he carried the letter to M. Constance without breaking the seal.

“The activity of the minister carried him to Ayuthia as soon as he had perused the letter and received orders from the king, his master. On arriving, he discovered that the governor, who had received notice of the conspiracy from one of the accomplices, had taken such good precautions, that the conspirators, who had already assembled, finding their plot discovered, had retired to their own dwellings. M. Constance profited by their consternation to publish an amnesty in favor of those who confessed their crime and asked forgiveness. All did so except the prince of Macassar and those of his nation who, having obstinately refused to implore the king’s clemency, at length experienced his justice.

“The Macassars are the bravest and most determined warriors of the East. When they are closely pressed, they swallow opium, which produces a species of intoxication, or rather fury, in which they forget danger and fight desperately.

“M. Constance took measures for attacking cautiously men from whom he expected so much resistance; but he exposed his own person on this occasion with the resolution of a gallant man, pressing upon the furious troop at the head of a few brave



soldiers, and always turning where the danger was greatest, so that five or six of his own people were killed beside him. The Macassar prince, who sought his life, having perceived him, prepared to throw his dart ; but the minister having placed himself in a position to ward off the blow, the prince directed his javelin against an English captain. The captain dodged ; but the prince was not so fortunate as to escape a musket-ball aimed at him by a Frenchman, which killed him on the spot. This terminated the combat, in which the victory gained by the minister rendered the king, his master, more absolute over his own people, and more than ever formidable to his enemies.

“ The whole kingdom was yet ringing with the praises which this vigorous action drew upon M. Constance, when the French vessels arrived. MM. de la Loubère and Ceberet, envoys extraordinary of the king for the execution of the treaty, had a contest with the Court of Siam upon the ceremonial to be observed, which, in the first instance, caused a difference between them and M. Constance, and afterwards brought about some bitter disputes on other subjects. In essentials the service did not suffer, M. Constance steadily pursuing his aim, which was the alliance of the two kings for the establishment of religion. The French troops were directed to guard Bangkok and Merguy, the two posts in the whole kingdom most advantageous for the interests of commerce.

“ M. Constance had already so high an esteem and so tender a regard for our great king, and the

king of Siam, his master, had entered so entirely into his sentiments, that this sovereign, thinking the French troops were not sufficiently near his person, determined to ask from the king, in addition to the troops already landed, a company of two hundred body-guards. As there was much to arrange between the two monarchs for the establishment of religion, not only in Siam, but in many other places where M. Constance hoped to spread it, they resolved that Father Tachard should return to France, accompanied by three mandarins, to present to his majesty the letter from their king; and that he should thence proceed to Rome, to solicit from the Pope assistance in preserving tranquillity and spreading Christianity in the Indies.

“Father Tachard having received from the king and his minister the necessary orders, left his companions under the direction of M. Constance, and quitted Siam, accompanied by the envoys extraordinary of the king, at the beginning of the year 1686. He reached Brest in the month of July in the same year.

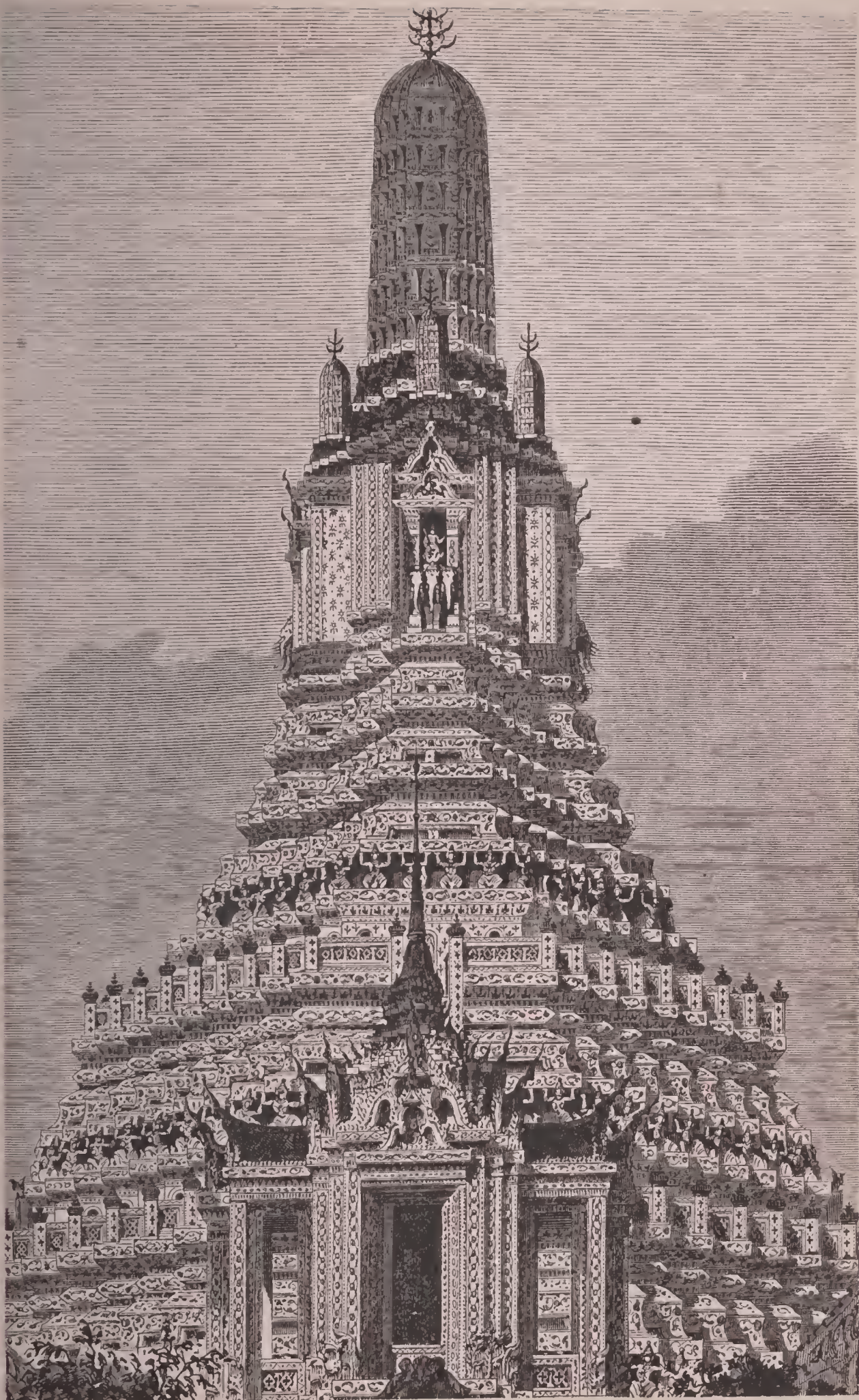
“Never was negotiation more successful. Occupied as was the king in waging war with the greater part of Europe, leagued against him by the Protestant party, he made no delay in equipping vessels to convey to the king of Siam the guards which he had requested.”

It is certainly not surprising that some of the Siamese noblemen should have looked with suspicion on the extraordinary measures which Phaulcon had inaugurated. With a French military force in pos-

session of some of the most important points in the kingdom, and with the Roman Catholic religion securing for itself something like a dominant establishment, it is no wonder that conspiracies against the authors of the new movement should be repeated and ultimately successful. The king had no male heir; and it seemed to a nobleman named Pitraxa that the succession might as well come to him as to the foreigner who had already risen to such a dangerous authority. This time the conspiracy was more audaciously and triumphantly carried out. The king, who was beginning to grow old and infirm, was taken sick, and during his illness Pitraxa got possession of the royal seals, and by means of them secured supplies of arms and powder for the furtherance of his designs. The crisis rapidly approached. Phaulcon determined to arrest the chief conspirator, but was for once outwitted. The French forces which he summoned to his assistance were intercepted and turned back by a false report. Pitraxa made himself master of the palace, of the person of the king, and of all the royal family. It was evident to Phaulcon that the end had come. His resolution was taken accordingly.

“Having with him a few Frenchmen, two Portuguese, and sixteen English soldiers, he called these together, and, with his confessor, entered his chapel that he might prepare for the death which appeared to await him; whence passing into his wife’s chamber, he bade her farewell, saying that the king was a prisoner, and that he would die at his feet. He then went out to go direct to the palace, flattering





THE GREAT TOWER OF THE PAGODA WAT CHANG.





himself that with the small number of Europeans who followed him, he should be able to make his way through the Indians who endeavored to arrest him, so as to reach the king. He would have succeeded had his followers been as determined as himself; but on entering the first court of the palace, he was suddenly surrounded by a troop of Siamese soldiers. He was putting himself into a defensive attitude when he perceived that he was abandoned by all his suite except the French, so that the contest was too unequal to be long maintained. He was obliged to yield to the force of numbers; and he and the Frenchmen with him were made prisoners and loaded with irons."

It remained for the usurper to rid himself of the French soldiers, who were still in possession of the two most considerable places in the country. Under a false pretext he won over to himself, temporarily, the commander of the French forces. "Upon this, six French officers who were at court, finding their safety endangered, resolved to leave and retire to Bangkok. They armed themselves, mounted on horseback, and under pretence of a ride, easily escaped from the guard Pitraxa had appointed to accompany them. It is true that, for the one they had got rid of, they found between Louvô and the river troops at different intervals, which, however, they easily passed. On reaching the river, they discovered a boat filled with talapoins, which they seized, driving away its occupants. As, however, they did not take the precaution of tying down the rowers, they had the vexation of having them



escape under cover of the night, each swimming away from his own side of the boat. Compelled to row it themselves, they soon became so weary that they determined to land, and continue their journey on foot. This was not without its difficulties, as the people, warned by the talapoins whose boat had been seized, and by the fugitive rowers, assembled in troops upon the river-side, uttering loud cries. Notwithstanding this, they leaped out, and gained the plains of Ayuthia, where, most unfortunately, they lost their way. The populace still followed them, and though not venturing to approach very near, never lost sight of them, and continued to annoy them as much as possible. They might, after all, have escaped, had not hunger compelled them to enter into a parley for a supply of provisions. In answer, they were told that they would not be listened to until they had laid down their arms. Then these cowardly wretches, instead of furnishing them with provisions, threw themselves upon them, stripped them, and carried them bound to Ayuthia, whence they were sent back to Louvô most unworthily treated. A troop of three hundred Moham-medans, which Pitraxa on learning their flight sent in pursuit of them, and which met them on their return, treated them so brutally that one named Brecy died from the blows they inflicted. The rest were committed to prison on their arrival at Louvô.

“ From this persecution of the French fugitives, the infidels insensibly passed to persecuting all the Christians in Siam, as soon as they learned that M. Desfarges was on the road to join Pit-

raxa ; for from that time the tyrant, giving way to the suspicions infused by crime and ambition, no longer preserved an appearance of moderation towards those he hated. His detestation of the Christians had been for some time kept within bounds by the esteem he still felt for the French ; but he had no sooner heard of the deference shown by their general to the orders he had sent him, than, beginning to fear nothing, he spared none.

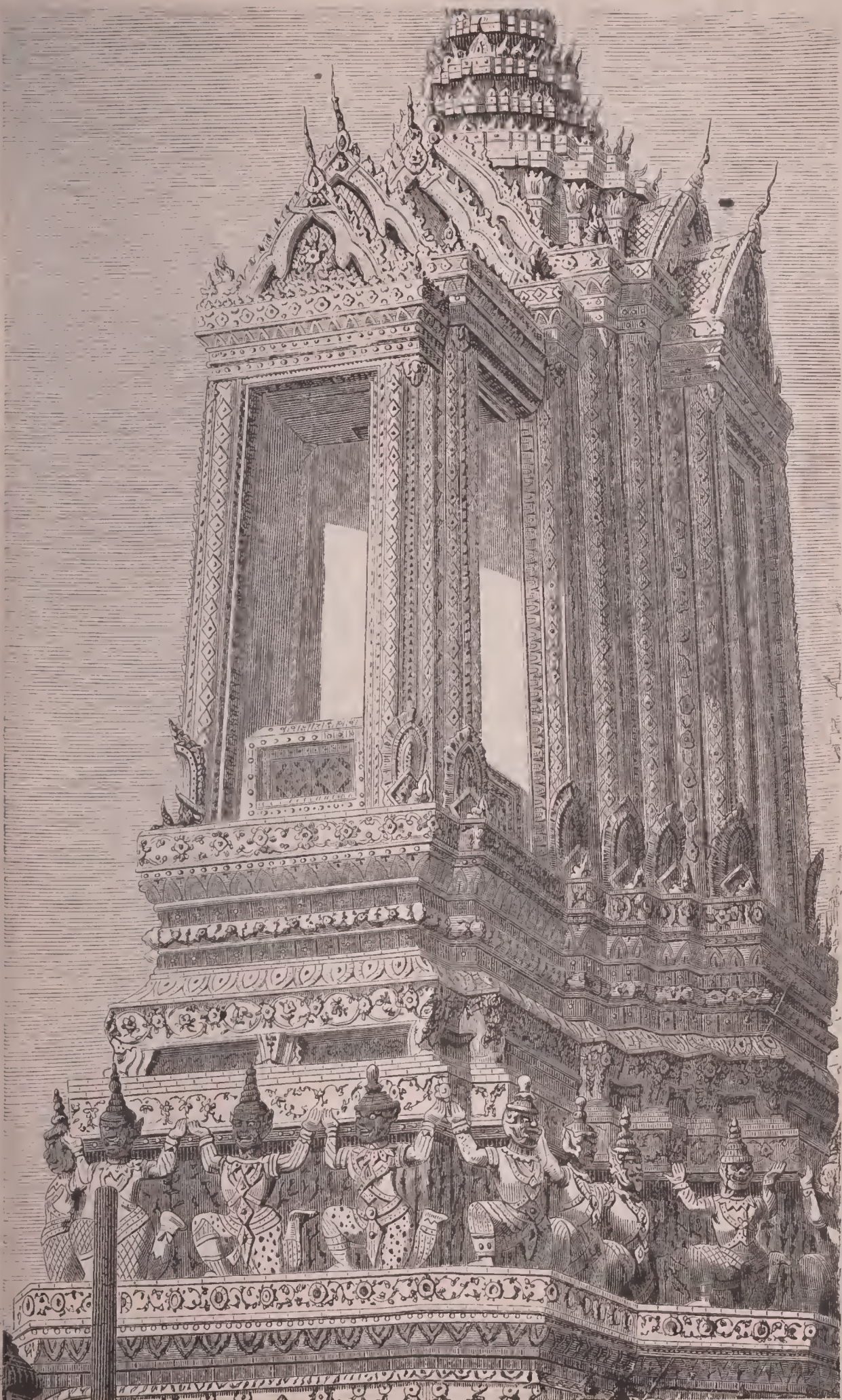
“ As the prison of M. Constance was in the interior of the palace, no one knows the details of his sufferings. Some say, that to make him confess the crimes of which he was accused, they burned the soles of his feet ; others, that an iron hoop was bound round his temples. It is certain that he was kept in a prison made of stakes, loaded with three heavy chains, and wanting even the necessaries of life, till Madame Constance, having discovered the place of his imprisonment, obtained permission to furnish him with them.

“ She could not long continue to do so, being soon herself in want. The usurper had at first appeared to respect her virtue, and had shown her some degree of favor : he had restored her son, who had been taken from her by soldiers, and exculpated himself from the robbery. But these courtesies were soon discontinued. The virtues of Madame Constance had for a time softened the ferocity of the tyrant ; but the report of her wealth, which he supposed to be enormous, excited his cupidity, which could not in any way be appeased.

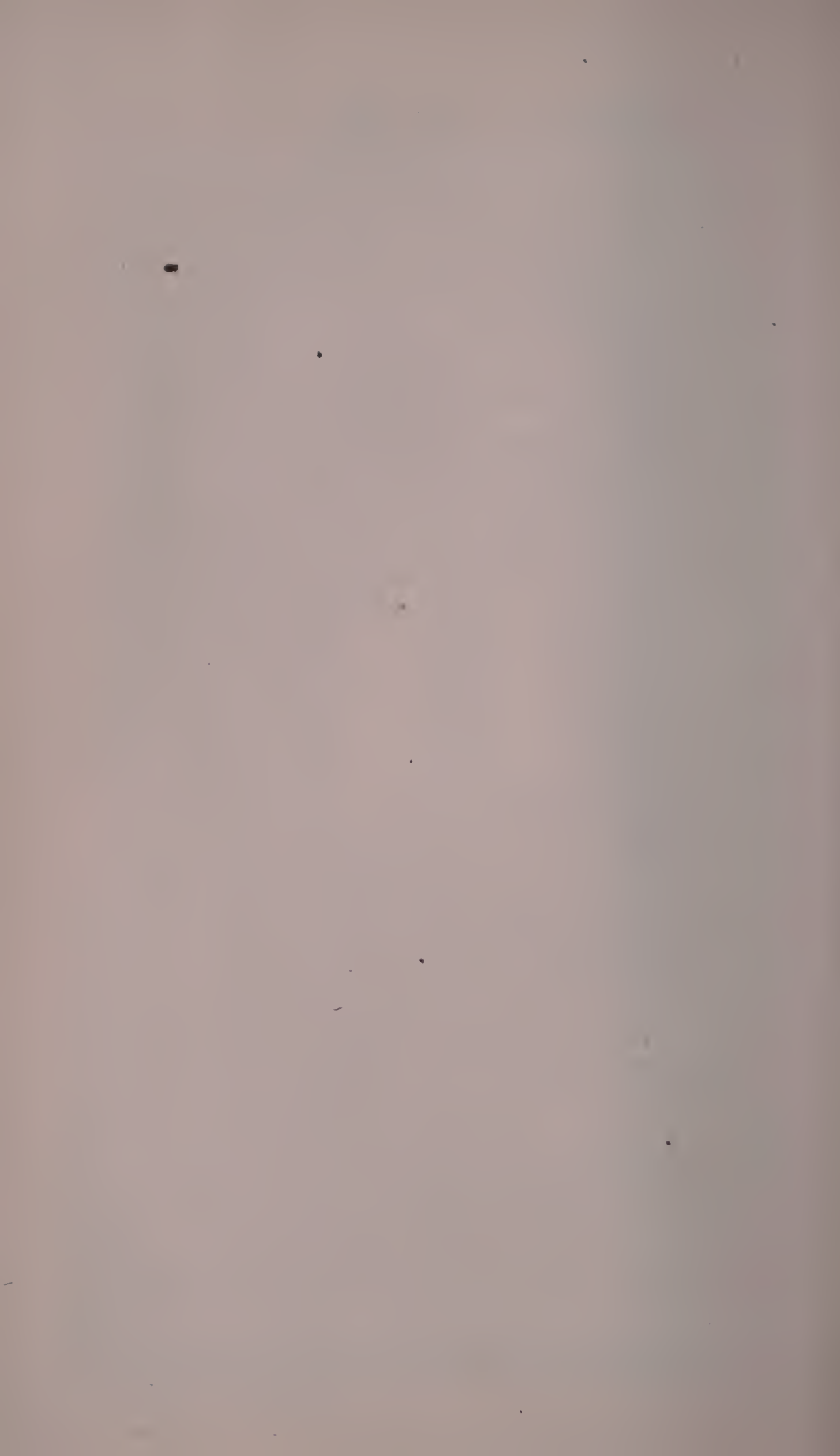
“ On the 30th of May, the official seals of her husband were demanded from her ; the next day, his arms, his papers, and his clothes were carried off : another day, boxes were sealed, and the keys taken away ; a guard was placed before her dwelling, and a sentinel at the door of her room to keep her in sight. Hitherto nothing had shaken her equanimity ; but this last insult so confounded her, that she could not help complaining. ‘ What,’ exclaimed she, weeping, ‘ what have I done to be treated like a criminal ?’ This, however, was the only complaint drawn by adversity from this noble Christian lady during the whole course of her trials. Even this emotion of weakness, so pardonable in a woman of two-and-twenty who had hitherto known nothing of misfortune, was quickly repaired ; for two Jesuits who happened to be with her on this occasion, having mildly represented to her that Christians who have their treasure in heaven, and who regard it as their country, should not afflict themselves like pagans for the loss of wealth and freedom—‘ It is true,’ said she, recovering her tranquillity ; ‘ I was wrong, my Fathers. God gave all ; He takes all away : may His holy name be praised ! I pray only for my husband’s deliverance.’

“ Scarcely two days had elapsed after the placing of the seals, when a mandarin, followed by a hundred men, came to break them by order of his new master, and carried off all the money, furniture and jewels he found in the apartments of this splendid palace. Madame Constance had the firmness her-





DETAILS OF THE GREAT TOWER OF THE PAGODA WAT CHANG.





self to conduct him, and to put into his hands all that he wished to take ; after which, looking at the Fathers, who still continued with her, ‘ Now,’ said she, calmly, ‘ God alone remains to us ; but none can separate us from Him.’

“ The mandarin having retired with his booty, it was supposed she was rid of him, and that nothing more could be demanded from those who had been plundered of all their possessions. The two Jesuits had left to return to their own dwelling, imagining there could be nothing to fear for one who had been stripped of her property, and who, having committed no crime, seemed shielded from every other risk. In the evening it appeared that they were mistaken ; for, about six o’clock, the same mandarin, accompanied by his satellites, came to demand her hidden treasures. ‘ I have nothing hidden,’ she answered : ‘ if you doubt my word, you can look ; you are the master here, and everything is open.’ So temperate a reply appeared to irritate the ruffian. ‘ I will not seek,’ said he, ‘ but, without stirring from the spot, I will compel you to bring me what I ask, or have you scourged to death.’ So saying, the wretch gave the signal to the executioners, who came forward with cords to bind, and thick rattans to scourge her. These preparations at first bewildered the poor woman, thus abandoned to the fury of a ferocious brute. She uttered a loud cry, and throwing herself at his feet said, with a look that might have touched the hardest heart, ‘ Have pity on me !’ But this barbarian answered with his accustomed fierceness, that he would have no mer-



cy on her, ordering her to be taken and tied to the door of her room, and having her arms, hands and fingers cruelly beaten. At this sad spectacle, her grandmother, her relatives, her servants, and her son uttered cries which would have moved any one but this hardened wretch. The whole of the unhappy family cast themselves at his feet, and touching the ground with their foreheads, implored mercy, but in vain. He continued to torture her from seven to nine o'clock ; and not having been able to gain anything, he carried her off, with all her family, except the grandmother, whose great age and severe illness made it impossible to remove her.

“ For some time no one knew what had become of Madame Constance, but at last her position was discovered. A Jesuit Father was one day passing by the stables of her palace, when the lady's aunt, who shared her captivity, begged permission of the guards to address the holy man, and ask him for money, promising that they should share it. In this manner was made known the humiliating condition of this unhappy and illustrious lady, shut up in a stable, where, half dead from the sufferings she had endured, she lay stretched upon a piece of matting, her son at her side. The Father daily sent her provisions, which were the only means of subsistence for herself and family, to whom she distributed food with so small a regard for her own wants, that a little rice and dried fish were all that she took for her own share, she having made a vow to abstain from meat for the rest of her life.

“ Up to this time, the grand mandarin had not

ventured to put an end to the existence of M. Constance, whom the French general had sent to demand, as being under the protection of the king, his master ; but now, judging that there was nothing more to fear either from him or from his friends, he resolved to get rid of him. It was on the 5th of June, Whitsun-eve, that he ordered his execution by the Phaja Sojatan, his son, after having, without any form of trial, caused to be read in the palace the sentence of death given by himself against this minister, whom he accused of having leagued with his enemies. This sentence pronounced, the accused was mounted on an elephant, and taken, well guarded, into the forest of Thale-Phutson, as if the tyrant had chosen the horrors of solitude to bury in oblivion an unjust and cruel deed.

“ Those who conducted him remarked that during the whole way he appeared perfectly calm, praying earnestly, and often repeating aloud the names of Jesus and of Mary.

“ When they reached the place of execution, he was ordered to dismount, and told that he must prepare to die. The approach of death did not alarm him ; he saw it near as he had seen it at a distance, and with the same intrepidity. He asked of Sojatan only a few moments to finish his prayer, which he did kneeling, with so touching an air, that these heathens were moved by it. His petitions concluded, he lifted his hands towards heaven, and protesting his innocence, declared that he died willingly, having the testimony of his conscience that,

as a minister, he had acted solely for the glory of the true God, the service of the king, and the welfare of the state ; that he forgave his enemies, as he hoped himself to be forgiven by God. ‘ For the rest, my lord,’ said he, turning to the Sojatan, ‘ were I as guilty as my enemies declare me, my wife and my son are innocent : I commend them to your protection, asking for them neither wealth nor position, but only life and liberty.’ Having uttered these few words, he meekly raised his eyes to heaven, showing by his silence that he was ready to receive the fatal blow.

“ An executioner advanced, and cut him in two with a back stroke of his sabre, which brought him to the ground, heaving one last, long sigh.

“ Thus died, at the age of forty-one, in the very prime of life, this distinguished man, whose sublime genius, political skill, great energy and penetration, warm zeal for religion, and strong attachment to the king, his master, rendered him worthy of a longer life and of a happier destiny.

“ Who can describe the grief of Madame Constance at the melancholy news of her husband’s death ?

“ This illustrious descendant of Japanese martyrs was subjected to incredible persecutions, which she endured to the end with heroic constancy and wonderful resignation.”

From this edifying narrative, grandiloquent and devout by turns, and written from the Jesuit point of view, it is sufficiently surprising to turn to Kämpfer’s brief and prosaic account of the same



events. According to him the intrigue and treachery was wholly on the side of Phaulcon, who had planned to place on the throne the king's son-in-law, Moupi-Tatso, a dependent and tool of his own, as soon as the sick king, whose increasing dropsy threatened him with sudden dissolution, should be dead; Pitraxa and his sons, the king's two brothers, as presumptive heirs to the crown, and whoever else was like to oppose the conspirator's designs, were to be despatched out of the way. "Pursuant to this scheme, Moupi's father and relations had already raised 1,400 men, who lay dispersed through the country; and the better to facilitate the execution of this design, Phaulcon persuaded the sick king, having found means to introduce himself into his apartment in private, that it would be very much for the security of his person, during the ill state of his health, to send for the French general and part of his garrison up to Livo, where the king then was, being a city 15 leagues north of Ayuthia, and the usual place of the king's residence, where he used to spend the greater part of his time. General des Farges being on his way thither, the conspiracy was discovered by Pitraxa's own son, who happening to be with two of the king's concubines in an apartment adjoining that where the conspirators were, had the curiosity to listen at the door, and having heard the bloody resolution that had been taken, immediately repaired to his father to inform him of it. Pitraxa without loss of time acquainted the king with this conspiracy, and then sent for Moupi, Phaulcon, and the mandarins of

their party, as also for the captain of the guards, to court, and caused the criminals forthwith to be put in irons, notwithstanding the king expressed the greatest displeasure at his so doing. Phaulcon had for some time absented himself from court, but now being summoned, he could no longer excuse himself, though dreading some ill event : it is said he took leave of his family in a very melancholy manner. Soon after, his silver chair, wherein he was usually carried, came back empty—a bad omen to his friends and domestics, who could not but prepare themselves to partake in their master's misfortune. This happened 19th May, in the year 1689. Two days after, Pitraxa ordered, against the king's will, Moupi's head to be struck off, throwing it at Phaulcon's feet, then loaded with irons, with this reproach : ' See, there is your king !' The unfortunate sick king, heartily sorry for the death of his dearest Moupi, earnestly desired that the deceased's body might not be exposed to any further shame, but decently buried, which was accordingly complied with. Moupi's father was seized by stratagem upon his estate between Ayuthia and Livo, and all their adherents were dispersed. Phaulcon, after having been tortured and starved for 14 days, and thereby reduced almost to a skeleton, had at last his irons taken off, and was carried away after sunset in an ordinary chair, unknowing what would be his fate. He was first carried to his house, which he found rifled : his wife lay a prisoner in the stable, who, far from taking leave of him, spit in his face, and would not so much as suffer him to

kiss his only remaining son of four years of age, another son being lately dead and still unburied. From thence he was carried out of town to the place of execution, where, notwithstanding all his reluctancy, he had his head cut off. His body was divided into two parts, and covered with a little earth, which the dogs scratched away in the night-time, and devoured the corpse to the bones. Before he died, he took his seal, two silver crosses, a relic set in gold which he wore on his breast, being a present from the Pope, as also the order of St. Michael which was sent him by the King of France, and delivered them to a mandarin who stood by, desiring him to give them to his little son—presents, indeed, that could be of no great use to the poor child, who to this day, with his mother, goes begging from door to door, nobody daring to intercede for them.” \*

It seems to be growing every year more difficult to form positive opinions concerning the various characters with whom history makes us acquainted, and we have here a sufficiently wide choice between two opposite estimates of poor Phaulcon. But whichever estimate we adopt, it remains abundantly evident that his career is one of the most romantic and extraordinary in the world. Venetian by descent, Greek by birth, English by avocation, Siamese by choice and fortune; at first almost a beggar, a shipwrecked adventurer against whom fate seemed

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\* *History of Japan*, vol. i., p. 19-21. London, 1728; quoted in Bowring.



hopelessly adverse, he became the chief actor in a scheme of dominion which might have given to France a realm rivalling in wealth and grandeur the British possessions in India.

Some traces of the public works of which Phaulcon was the founder still remain to show the nature of the internal improvements which he inaugurated. His scheme of foreign alliance was a failure, but that he did much to develop the resources of the kingdom there would seem to be no doubt. "At Lophaburi," says Sir John Bowring, "a city founded about A. D., 600, the palace of Phaulcon still exists ; and there are the remains of a Christian church founded by him, in which, some of the traditions say, he was put to death. I brought with me from Bangkok, the capital, one of the columns of the church, richly carved and gilded, as a relic of the first\* Christian temple erected in Siam, and as associated with the history of that singular, long-successful and finally sacrificed adventurer. The words *Jesus Hominum Salvator* are still inscribed over the canopy of the altar, upon which the image of Buddha now sits to be worshipped."

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\* Sir John Bowring is probably mistaken. It seems to be well enough established that one or two Christian churches were built by the Portuguese, a century before the date of Phaulcon's career.

## CHAPTER V.

### MODERN SIAM.—THE PRESENT DYNASTY.

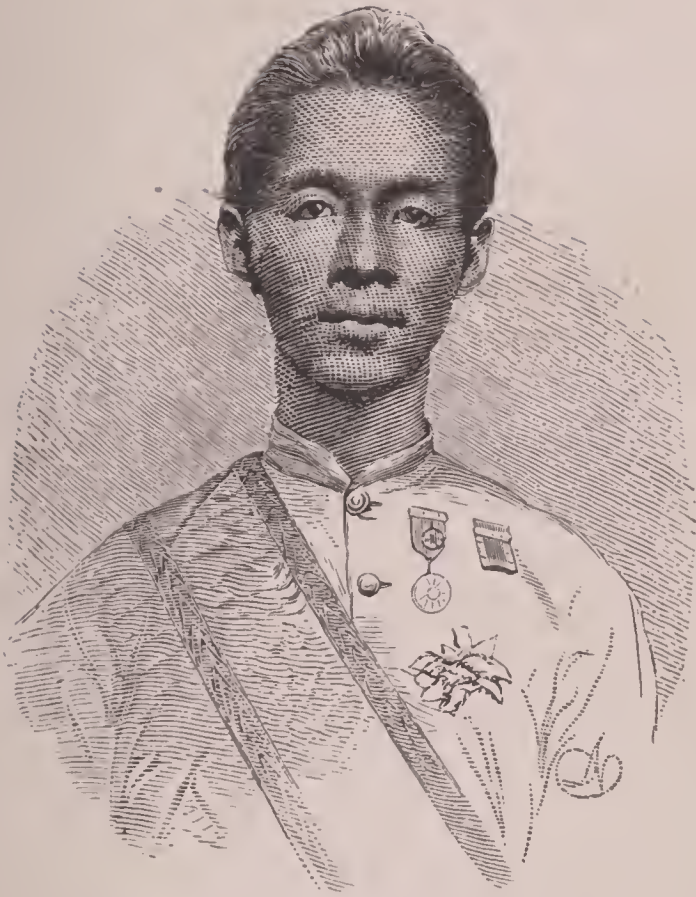
THE present king of Siam is the fourth in succession from that distinguished general who was at first the friend and companion, and at last something like the murderer of the renowned Phya Tak, the founder of the new capital, and indeed of the new kingdom of Siam. For, with the fall of Ayuthia and the removal of the seat of government to Bangkok, the country entered on a new era of prosperity and progress. Bangkok is not far from sixty miles nearer to the mouth of the river than Ayuthia, and the geographical change was significant of an advance towards the other nations of the world and of more intimate relations of commerce and friendship with them. The founder of this dynasty reigned prosperously for twenty-seven years, and under his sway the country enjoyed the repose and peace which after a period of prolonged and devastating war it so greatly needed. After him, his son continued the pacific administration of the government for fourteen years, until 1824. At the death of this king, (the second of the new dynasty,) who left as heirs to the throne two sons of the same mother, the succession

was usurped by an illegitimate son, who contrived by cunning management and by a readiness to avail himself of force, if it was needed, to possess himself of the sovereignty, and to be confirmed in it by the nobles and council of state. The two legitimate sons of the dead king, the oldest of whom had been expressly named to succeed his father, were placed by this usurpation in a position of extreme peril ; and the elder of the two retired at once into a Buddhist monastery as a *talapoin*, where he was safe from molestation and could wait his time to claim his birth-right. The younger son, as having less to fear, took public office under the usurper and acquainted himself with the cares and responsibilities of government.

After a reign of twenty-seven years, closing in the year 1851, the usurper died. His reign was marked by some events of extraordinary interest. His royal palace was destroyed by fire, but afterwards rebuilt upon a larger scale and in a better style. And various military expeditions against adjoining countries were undertaken with results of more or less importance. The most interesting of these expeditions was that against the Laos country, a brief account of which by an intelligent and able writer is quoted in Bowring's book. As a picture of the style of warfare and the barbarous cruelties of a successful campaign, it is striking and instructive. It is as follows :

“The expedition against Laos was successful. As usual in Siamese warfare, they laid waste the country, plundered the inhabitants, brought them to Bangkok, sold them and gave them away as slaves.





THE REIGNING FIRST KING OF SIAM.



The prince Vun Chow and family made their escape into Cochin China ; but instead of meeting with a friendly reception they were seized by the king of that country and delivered as prisoners to the Siamese. The king (of Laos) arrived in Bangkok about the latter end of 1828, and underwent there the greatest cruelties barbarians could invent. He was confined in a large iron cage, exposed to a burning sun and obliged to proclaim to every one that the king of Siam was great and merciful, that he himself had committed a great error, and deserved his present punishment. In this cage were placed with the prisoner a large mortar to pound him in, a large boiler to boil him in, a hook to hang him by and a sword to decapitate him ; also a sharp pointed spike for him to sit on. His children were sometimes put in along with him. He was a mild, respectable-looking, old, grey-headed man, and did not live long to gratify his tormentors, death having put an end to his sufferings. His body was taken and hung in chains on the bank of the river, about two or three miles below Bangkok. The conditions on which the Cochin Chinese gave up Chow Vun Chow were, that the king of Siam would appoint a new prince to govern the Laos country, who should be approved of by the Cochin Chinese, and that the court of Siam should deliver up the persons belonging to the Siamese army who attacked and killed some Cochin Chinese during the Laos war."

It is safe to say that within the fifty years since 1828 the kingdom has made such progress in civilization that a picture of barbarism and cruelty like



that which is given in the above narrative could not possibly be repeated in Siam to-day.

The reign of this king was noteworthy for the treaty of commerce between Great Britain and Siam, negotiated by Captain Burney, as also for other negotiations tending to similar and larger intercourse with other countries, especially with the United States. But the concessions granted were ungenerous, and a spirit of jealousy and dislike continued to govern the conduct of Siam towards other nations.

Notwithstanding the slow growth of that enlightened confidence which is the only sure guaranty of commercial prosperity, Siam was brought into connection with the outside world through the labors of the missionaries, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, who, during the reign of this king, established themselves in the country. Some more detailed reference to the labors and successes of the missionaries will be made in a subsequent chapter. It is by means of these self-sacrificing and devoted men that the great advances which Siam has made have been chiefly brought about. The silent influence which they were exerting during this period, from 1824 to 1851, was really the great fact of the reign of the king Phra Chao Pravat Thong. Once or twice the king became suspicious of them, and attempted to hinder or to put an end to their labors. In 1848 he went so far as to issue an edict against the Roman Catholic missionaries, commanding the destruction of all their places of worship; but the edict was only partially carried into execution. The

change which has taken place in the attitude of the government in regard to religious liberty, and the sentiments of the present king in regard to it, are best expressed by a royal proclamation issued during the year 1870, a quotation from which is given in the Bangkok Calendar for the next year ensuing, introduced by a brief note from the editor, the Rev. D. B. Bradley.

“The following translation is an extract from the Royal Siamese Calendar for the current year. It is issued by the authority of his majesty the supreme king, and is to me quite interesting in many respects, but especially in the freedom it accords to all Siamese subjects in the great concerns of their religion. Having near the close of the pamphlet given good moral lessons, the paper concludes with the following noble sentiments, and very remarkable for a heathen king to promulgate :

“In regard to the concern of seeking and holding a religion that shall be a refuge to yourself in this life, it is a good concern and exceedingly appropriate and suitable that you all—every individual of you, should investigate and judge for himself according to his own wisdom. And when you see any religion whatever, or any company of religionists whatever likely to be of advantage to yourself, a refuge in accord with your own wisdom, hold to that religion with all your heart. Hold it not with a shallow mind, with mere guess-work, or because of its general popularity, or from mere traditional saying that it is the *custom* held from time immemorial ; and do not hold a religion that you have not good

evidence is true, and then frighten men's fears and flatter their hopes by it. Do not be frightened and astonished at diverse events (fictitious wonders) and hold to and follow them. When you shall have obtained a refuge, a religious faith that is beautiful and good and suitable, hold to it with great joy, and follow its teachings, and it will be a cause of prosperity to each one of you."

The contrast between the state of things represented by this document and that exemplified by the story of the treatment of the captive king of Laos is sufficiently striking. The man who tortured the king of Laos was the uncle of the young man who is now on the throne. But between the two,—covering the period from the year 1851 to the year 1868,—was a king whose character and history entitles him to be ranked among the most extraordinary and admirable rulers of modern times. To this man and his younger brother, who reigned conjointly as first and second kings, is due the honor of giving to their realm an honorable place among the nations of the world, and putting it in the van of progress among the kingdoms of the far East.

It seemed at first a misfortune that these two brothers should have been so long kept out of their rightful dignities by their comparatively coarse and cruel half-brother who usurped the throne. But it proved in the end, both for them and for the world, a great advantage. The usurper, when he seized the throne, promised to hold it for a few years only and to restore it to its rightful heirs as soon as their growth in years and in experience should fit them



to govern. So far was he, however, from making good his words that he had made all his arrangements to put his own son in his place. Having held the sovereignty for twenty-seven years the desire to perpetuate it in his own line was natural. And as he had about seven hundred wives there was no lack of children from among whom he might choose his heir. In 1851 he was taken sick, and it was evident that his end was at hand. At this crisis, says Sir John Bowring :

“The energy of the Praklang (the present Kalahom) saved the nation from the miseries of disputed succession. The Praklang’s eldest son Phya Sisurivong, held the fortresses of Paknam, and, with the aid of his powerful family, placed Chau Fa Tai upon the throne, and was made Kalahom, being at once advanced ten steps and to the position the most influential in the kingdom, that of prime minister. On the 18th March, 1851, the Praklang proposed to the council of nobles the nomination of Chau Fa Tai; he held bold language, carried his point, and the next day communicated the proceedings to the elected sovereign in his *wat*, (or temple,) everybody, even rival candidates, having given in their adhesion. By general consent, Chau Fa Noi was raised to the rank of wangna, or second king, having, it is said, one third of the revenues with a separate palace and establishment.”

It is difficult to determine how the custom of two kings reigning at once could have originated, and how far back in the history of Siam it is to be traced. It is possible that it originated with the

present dynasty, for the founder of this dynasty had a brother with whom he was closely intimate, who shared his fortunes when they were generals together under Phya Tak, and who might naturally enough have become his colleague when he ascended the throne. Under the reign of the uncle of the present kings the office of second king was abolished. But it was restored again at the next succession, and the first and second kings now reigning are the eldest surviving sons of those two brothers to whose illustrious reign the kingdom owes so much. Concerning those two brothers, the narratives of travel which will be given in the following chapters will have much to say ; for in them while they lived, and in their intelligent and worthy sons and successors, all that is most interesting and important in the history and condition of Siam is centred. They died—the younger in 1866 and the elder in a little more than a year afterward. A list of the children of the departed kings is given in the Bangkok Calendar, as “arranged by the royal father,” the first king. Of his own offspring, eighty-four in number, sixty-seven survived him. To the list of the children of the second king, the following note is prefixed, apparently “by authority :”

“There have been thirty-one royal mothers in the second king’s family, and sixty-three children born to them—to wit: thirty princes, twenty-seven princesses and six miscarriages. The oldest was a daughter, born in 1837, and died after a few days, and the second was prince George, (named after George Washington,) who heads the list of the sur-

viving children. Those born in the intervals of the years of the births of the surviving children, all deceased without any record of the time of their births. Only twenty-one of the thirty-one mothers have now their offspring with them, death having bereft the other ten of all they had."

In the list which follows, the names of the thirty survivors are given with the dates of birth, as "in the year of the dog," "of the rat," "of the cow," "of the small dragon," "of the hog," "of the monkey," "the tiger," "the rabbit" and "the serpent."



## CHAPTER VI.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE MEINAM.

THE entrance into the kingdom of Siam by the great river, which divides the country east and west, brings the traveller at once into all the richness and variety of tropical nature, and is well suited to produce an impression of the singular beauty and the vast resources of the "Land of the White Elephant." For this is the name which may properly be given to the kingdom since the flag of the country has been established. A very curious flag it makes—the white elephant on a red field—and very oddly it must look if ever it is necessary to hoist it upside down as a signal of distress; a signal eloquent indeed, for anything more helpless and distressing than this clumsy quadruped in that position can hardly be imagined.

The editor of this volume, who visited Siam in one of the vessels of the United States East India Squadron in 1857, and who was present at the exchange of ratifications of the treaty made in the previous year, has elsewhere described \* the impressions which were

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\* Hours at Home, vol. iv., pp. 464, 531; vol. v., p. 66.

made upon him at his first entrance into the country of the Meinam, and reproduces his own narrative, substantially unaltered, in this and the two following chapters.

There is enough to see in Siam, if only it could be described. But nothing is harder than to convey in words the indescribable charm of tropical life and scenery; and it was in this, in great measure, that the enjoyment of my month in Bangkok consisted. Always, behind the events which occupied us day by day, and behind the men and things with which we had to do, was the pervading charm of tropical nature—of soft warm sky, with floating fleecy clouds, and infinite depths of blue beyond them; of golden sunlight flooding everything by day; and when the day dies its sudden death, of mellow moonlight, as if from a perennial harvest moon; and of stars, that do not glitter with a hard and pointed radiance, as here, but melt through the mild air with glory in which there is never any thought of “twinkling.” Always there was the teeming life of land and sea, of jungle and of river; and the varying influence of fruitful nature, captivating every sense with sweet allurements. Read Mr. Tennyson’s “*Lotos Eaters*,” if you want to know what the tropics are.

It was drawing toward the middle of a splendid night in May, when I found myself among the “palms and temples” of this singular city. It had been a tiresome journey from the mouth of the river, rowing more than a score of miles against the rapid current; and, if there could be monotony in the

wonderful variety and richness of tropical nature, it might have been a monotonous journey. But the wealth of foliage, rising sometimes in the feathery plumes of the tall areca palm—of all palms the stateliest—or drooping sometimes in heavier and larger masses; crowding to the water's edge in dense, impenetrable jungle; or checked here and there by the toil of cultivation; or cleared for dwellings,—was a constant wonder and delight. Now and then we passed a bamboo house, raised high on poles above the ground, and looking like some monstrous bird's nest in the trees; but they were featherless bipeds who peered out from the branches at the passing boats; and not bird's notes, but children's voices, that clamored in wonder, or were silenced in awe at the white-faced strangers. Sometimes the white walls and shining roofs of temples gleamed through the dark verdure, suggesting the architectural magnificence and beauty which the statelier temples of the city would exhibit. Bald-headed priests, in orange-colored scarfs, came out to watch us. Superb white pelicans stood pensive by the river side, or snatched at fish, or sailed on snowy wings with quiet majesty across the stream. Or may be, some inquiring monkey, grey-whiskered, leading two or three of tenderer years, as if he were their tutor, on a naturalist's expedition through the jungle, stops to look at us with peculiar curiosity, as at some singular and unexpected specimen, but stands ready to dodge behind the roots of mangrove trees in case of danger.

It will be fortunate for the traveller if, while he







GENERAL VIEW OF BANGKOK.

is rowing up the river, night shall overtake him ; for beside the splendor of the tropic stars above him, there will be rival splendors all about him. The night came down on me with startling suddenness—for “there is no twilight within the courts of the sun”—just as I was waiting at the mouth of a cross-cut canal, by which, when the tide should rise a little, I might avoid a long bend in the river. By the time the tide had risen, the night had fallen thick and dark, and the dense shade of the jungle, through which the canal led us, made it yet thicker and more dark. Great fern leaves, ten or fifteen feet in height, grew dense on either side, and fan-like, almost met over our heads. Above them stretched the forest trees. Among them rose the noise of night-birds, lizards, trumpeter-beetles, and creatures countless and various, making a hoarse din, which, if it was not musical, at least was lively. But the jungle, with its darkness and its din, had such a beauty as I never have seen equalled, when its myriad fire-flies sparkled thick on every side. I had seen fire-flies before, and had heard of them ; but I had never seen or heard, nor have I since then ever seen or heard, of anything like these. The peculiarity of them was—not that they were so many, though they were innumerable—not that they were so large, though they were very large—but that they clustered, as by a preconcerted plan, on certain kinds of trees, avoiding carefully all other kinds, and then, as if by signal from some director of the spectacle, they all sent forth their light at once, at simultaneous and exact intervals, so that the whole



tree seemed to flash and palpitate with living light. Imagine it. At one instant was blackness of darkness and the croaking jungle. Then suddenly on every side flashed out these fiery trees, the form of each, from topmost twig to outmost bough, set thick with flaming jewels. It was easy to imagine at the top of each some big white-waistcoated fire-fly, with the baton of director, ordering the movements of the rest.

This peculiarity of the Siamese fire-flies, or, as our popular term graphically describes them, the tropical "lightning-bugs" was noticed as long ago as the time of old Kämpfer, who speaks concerning them as follows :

"The glow-worms settle on some trees like a fiery cloud, with this surprising circumstance, that a whole swarm of these insects, having taken possession of one tree and spread themselves over its branches, sometimes hide their light all at once, and a moment after make it appear again, with the utmost regularity and exactness, as if they were in perpetual systole and diastole." The lapse of centuries has wrought no change in the rhythmic regularity of this surprising exhibition. Out upon the river once again ; the houses on the shore began to be more numerous, and presently began to crowd together in continuous succession ; and from some of them the sound of merry laughter and of pleasant music issuing, proved that not all the citizens of Bangkok were asleep. The soft light of the cocoanut-oil lamps supplied the place of the illumination of the fire-flies. Boats, large and small, were passing swiftly up and

down the stream ; now and then the tall masts of some merchant ships loomed indistinctly large through the darkness. I could dimly see high towers of temples and broad roofs of palaces ; and I stepped on shore, at last, on the

“Dark shore, just seen that it was rich,”

with a half-bewildered feeling that I was passing through some pleasant dream of the Arabian Nights, from which I should presently awake.

Even when the flooding sunlight of the tropical morning poured in through the windows, it was difficult for me to realize that I was not in some unreal land. There was a sweet, low sound of music filling the air with its clear, liquid tones. And, joining with the music, was the pleasant ringing of a multitude of little bells, ringing I knew not where. It seemed as if the air was full of them. Close by, on one side, was the palace of a prince, and somewhere in his house or in his courtyard there were people playing upon instruments of music, made of smoothed and hollowed bamboo. But no human hands were busy with the bells. Within a stone's throw of my window rose the shining tower of the most splendid temple in Bangkok. From its broad octagonal base to the tip of its splendid spire it must measure, I should think, a good deal more than two hundred feet, and every inch of its irregular surface glitters with ornament. Curiously wrought into it are forms of men and birds, and grotesque beasts that seem, with outstretched hands or claws, to hold it up. Two thirds of the way from the base,

stand, I remember, four white elephants, wrought in shining porcelain, facing one each way toward four points of the compass. From the rounded summit rises, like a needle, a sharp spire. This was the temple tower, and all over the magnificent pile, from the tip of the highest needle to the base, from every prominent angle and projection, there were hanging sweet-toned bells, with little gilded fans attached to their tongues; so swinging that they were vocal in the slightest breeze. Here was where the music came from. Even as I stood and looked, I caught the breezes at it. Coming from the unseen distance, rippling the smooth surface of the swift river, where busy oars and carved or gilded prows of many boats were flashing in the sun, sweeping with pleasant whispers through the varied richness of the tropical foliage, stealing the perfume of its blossoms and the odor of its fruits, they caught the shining bells of this great tower, and tossed the music out of them. Was I awake I wondered, or was it some dream of Oriental beauty that would presently vanish?

Something like this Æolian tower there must be in the adjacent kingdom of Birmah, where the graceful pen of Mrs. Judson has put the scene in verse :

“ On the pagoda spire  
The bells are swinging,  
Their little golden circlets in a flutter  
With tales the wooing winds have dared to utter ;  
Till all are ringing,  
As if a choir  
Of golden-nested birds in heaven were singing ;



And with a lulling sound  
The music floats around  
And drops like balm into the drowsy ear."

The verse breathes the spirit, and gives almost the very sound, of the bewitching tropical scene on which I looked, and out of which "the music of the bells" was blown to me on my first morning in Bangkok.

No doubt my first impressions (which I have given with some detail, and with all the directness of "that right line I") were fortunate. But three or four weeks of Bangkok could not wear them off or counteract them. It is the Venice of the East. Its highway is the river, and canals are its by-ways. There are streets, as in Venice, used by pedestrians; but the travel and the carriage is, for the most part, done by boats. Only, in place of the verdureless margin of the watery streets, which gives to Venice, with all its beauty, a half-dreary aspect, there is greenest foliage shadowing the water, and mingling with the dwellings, and palaces, and temples on the shore; and instead of the funereal gondolas of monotonous color, with solitary *gondoliers*, are boats of every size and variety, paddled sometimes by one, sometimes by a score of oarsmen. Some of the bamboo dwellings of the humbler classes are built, literally, on the river, floating on rafts, a block of them together, or raised on poles above the surface of the water. The shops expose their goods upon the river side, and wait for custom from the thronging boats. The temples and the palaces must stand, of course, on solid ground, but the river is the great

Broadway, and houses crowd upon the channel of the boats, and boats bump the houses. It is a picturesque and busy scene on which you look as you pass on amid the throng. Royal boats, with carved and gilded prows, with shouting oarsmen, rush by you, hurrying with the rapid current; or the little skiff of some small peddler, with his assortment of various "notions," paddling and peddling by turns, is dexterously urged along its way. Amid all this motion and traffic is that charm of silence which makes Venice so dreamlike. No rumble of wheels nor clatter of hoofs disturbs you. Only the sound of voices, softened as it comes along the smooth water, or the music of a palace, or the tinkling of the bells of a pagoda, break the stillness. It is a beautiful Broadway, without the Broadway roar and din.

Of course there is not, in this tropical Venice, anything to equal the incomparable architectural beauty of the Adriatic city. And yet it seemed to me that the architecture of Siam was in very perfect accord with all its natural surroundings. In all parts of the city you may find the "wats" or temples. When we started on our first day's sight-seeing, and told the old Portuguese half-breed, who acted as our interpreter, to take us to a "wat," he asked, with a pun of embarrassment, "What wat?" Of course we must begin with the pagoda of innumerable bells, but where to stop we knew not. Temple after temple waited to be seen. Through long, dim corridors, crowded with rows of solemn idols carved and gilded; through spacious open courts paved with

large slabs of marble, and filled with graceful spires or shafts or columns ; along white walls with gilded eaves and cornices ; beneath arches lined with gold, to sacred doors of ebony, or pearly gates of iridescent beauty ; amid grotesque stone statues, or queer paintings of the Buddhist *inferno*, (strangely similar to the mediæval Christian representations of the same subject,) you may wander till you are tired. You may happen to come upon the *bonzes* at their devotions, or you may have the silent temples to yourself. In one of them you will find that clumsy, colossal image, too big to stand, and built recumbent, therefore—a great mass of heavy masonry, covered thick with gilding, and measuring a hundred and fifty feet in length. If you could stand him up, his foot would cover eighteen feet—an elephantine monster. But the roofs, of glazed tiles, with a centre of dark green and with a golden margin, are the greatest charm of the temples. Climb some pagoda and look down upon the city, and, on every side, among the “ breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster,” you will see the white walls roofed with shining green and gold, and surmounted by their gilded towers and spires. Like the temples are the palaces, but less splendid. But everywhere, whether in temples or palaces, you will find, not rude, barbaric tawdriness of style, but elegance and skill of which the Western nations might be proud. Good taste, and a quick sense of beauty, and the ability to express them in their handiwork, all these are constantly indicated in the architecture of this people. And they make the city one of almost unri-



valed picturesqueness to the traveller, who glides from river to canal and from canal to river, under the shadow of the temple towers, and among the shining walls of stately palaces.

Of course, where so much wealth is lavished on the public buildings, there must be great resources to draw from ; and, indeed, the mineral wealth of the country appears at almost every turn. Precious stones and the precious metals seem as frèquent as the fire-flies in the jungle. Sometimes, as in the silver currency, there is an absence of all workmanship ; the coinage being little lumps of silver, rudely rolled together in a mass and stamped. But sometimes, as in the teapots, betel-nut boxes, cigar-holders, with which the noblemen are provided when they go abroad, you will see workmanship of no mean skill. Often these vessels are elegantly wrought. Sometimes they are studded with jewels ; sometimes they are beautifully enamelled in divers colors. Once I called upon a noble, who brought out a large assortment of uncut stones—some of them of great value—and passed them to me as one would a snuff-box, not content till I had helped myself. More than once I have seen children of the nobles with no covering at all, except the strings of jewelled gold that hung, in barbarous opulence, upon their necks and shoulders ; but there was wealth enough in these to fit the little fellows with a very large assortment of most fashionable and Christian apparel, even at the ruinous rate of tailors' prices at the present day. To go about among theseurchins, and among the houses of the nobles and the

king's palaces, gives one the half-bewildered and half-covetous feeling that it gives to be conducted by polite but scrutinizing attendants through a mint. Surely we had come at last to .

“Where the gorgeous East, with richest hand,  
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.”

Of course, of all this wealth the king's share was the lion's share.

Then, as for vegetable wealth, I do not know that there is anywhere a richer valley in the world than the valley of the Meinam. All the productions of the teeming tropics may grow luxuriantly here. There was rice enough in Siam, the year before my visit, to feed the native population, and to supply the failure of the rice crop in southern China, preventing thus the havoc of a famine in that crowded empire, and making fortunes for the merchants who were prompt enough to carry it from Bangkok to Canton. Cotton grows freely beneath that burning sky. Sugar, pepper, and all spices may be had with easy cultivation. There is gutta-percha in the forests. There are dye-stuffs and medicines in the jungles. The painter gets his gamboge, as its name implies, from Cambodia, which is tributary to their majesties of Bangkok. As for the fruits, I cannot number them nor describe them. The mangostene, most delicate and most rare of them all, grows only in Siam, and in the lands adjacent to the Straits of Sunda and Malacca. Some things we may have which Siam cannot have, but the mangostene is her peculiar glory, and she will not lend it.

Beautiful to sight, smell, and taste, it hangs among its glossy leaves, the prince of fruits. Cut through the shaded green and purple of the rind; and lift the upper half as if it were the cover of a dish, and the pulp of half transparent, creamy whiteness stands in segments like an orange, but rimmed with darkest crimson where the rind was cut. It looks too beautiful to eat; but how the rarest, sweetest essence of the tropics seems to dwell in it as it melts to your delighted taste!

For everything there is a compensation.. If we do not have the mangostene, we do not have the durian—of all fruits, at first the most intolerable; but said, by those who have smothered their prejudices, to be of all fruits, at last, the most indispensable. When it is brought to you at first, you clamor till it is removed; if there are durians in the next room to you, you cannot sleep. Chloride of lime and disinfectants seem to be its necessary remedy. To eat it seems to be the sacrifice of self-respect; but endure it for a while, with closed nostrils, taste it once or twice, and you will cry for durians thenceforth, even—I blush to write it—even before the glorious mangostene. I have mentioned only the two extremes of the immense variety of fruits. One day the king sent to our party more than a hundred brazen dishes full of I do not know what various kinds. Piles of golden oranges and mangoes; pine-apples, blushing beneath their thorny skins; bananas, fresh and luscious. The memory of the heaped-up dishes is enough to make one glow with tropical delight in January.



This is the Land of the White Elephant, so singular, so rich, so beautiful ; but we need also to tell what manner of men the people are who live beneath the standard of the elephant, or what kings and nobles govern them.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A ROYAL GENTLEMAN.

SOON after arriving in Bangkok, in 1857, on the occasion referred to in the last chapter, the present editor was invited to an interview with the second king, (the father of the present second king.) The account of that interview was written while it was still a matter of recent memory ; and it seems better to reproduce the story, for the sake of the freshness with which the incidents described in it were recorded, rather than to attempt the rewriting of it. It is a characteristic picture of an extraordinary man, and of the manners and customs which still prevail for the most part (with some important exceptions) at the court of Siam. This king was the grandson of the founder of the present dynasty, and was the junior of the two princes who, by the usurpation of their half-brother were, for twenty-seven years, kept out of their birthright. Even so long ago as 1837, an intelligent traveller who visited Siam said concerning him : “ No man in the kingdom is so qualified to govern well. His naturally fine mind is enlarged and improved by intercourse with foreigners,





THE LATE SECOND KING.





by the perusal of English works, by studying Euclid and Newton, by freeing himself from a bigoted attachment to Buddhism, by candidly recognizing our superiority and a readiness to adopt our arts. He understands the use of the sextant and chronometer, and was anxious for the latest Nautical Almanac, which I promised to send him. His little daughters, accustomed to the sight of foreigners, so far from showing any signs of fear, always came to sit upon my lap, though the yellow cosmetic on their limbs was sure to be transferred in part to my dress. One of them took pride in repeating to me a few words of English, and the other took care to display her power of projecting the elbow forward,"—an accomplishment upon which the ladies of Siam still pride themselves, and in which they are extraordinarily expert.

This was in 1837. How greatly the character of the second king had developed since that time will appear from the editor's description, which refers, as has been said, to the year 1857.

One king at a time is commonly thought to be as much as any kingdom has need of. Indeed, there seems to be a growing tendency among the nations of the earth to think that even one is one too many, and the popular prejudice is setting very strongly in favor of none at all. Nevertheless, there are in Siam (or rather, until very recently, there were) two kings reigning together, each with the full rank and title of king, and with no rivalry between them. The law of succession does not seem to be uniform, nor

does it seem possible to ascertain it. The second king died last year, and I believe the first king is now governing alone. It is probable that, originally, a monarchy was the normal condition of the government, and that the duarchy is of comparatively modern origin. But it is certain that, ten years ago, when I was in the Land of the White Elephant, there was a kind of Siamese-twin arrangement in the kingdom. The two kings were brothers ; and though, as has been said, their rank and title were equal, the real power and work of government rested chiefly on the shoulders of the elder of the two, the other keeping discreetly and contentedly in the background. Both were men of noteworthy ability, and deserve to be known and honored for their personal attainments in civilization, and for what they have done to lift their kingdom out of degradation and barbarism, and to welcome and promote intercourse between it and the Western nations. When we remember the obstinacy of Oriental prejudice against innovation, and the persistency with which the people wrap themselves in their conceit as in a garment, we shall the better appreciate the state of things at the court of the White Elephant, which I am about to describe.

The second king was a man of social disposition, and fond of the company of strangers. And it was, doubtless, owing to this fact, that when he heard that there was an American man-of-war at the mouth of the river, and that an officer had been sent up to Bangkok to report her arrival, he sent a messenger and a boat with the request that I would



come and see him. It did not take long for the score of oarsmen, with the short, quick motion of their paddles, and the grunting energy with which they plied them, to bring the boat up to the palace gates. For, of course, the palace has a water-front, and one may pass at one step from among the thronging boats of the river into the quiet seclusion of the king's inclosure. Passing through a lofty gateway at the water's edge, we came to a large and stately temple, about which were priests in orange-colored drapery trying to screen their shining skulls from the fierce heat of the morning sun by means of fans. I used to feel sorry for the priests. Ecclesiastical law and usage compel them to shave every sign of hair from their heads. Not even a tail is left to them, but they are as bald as beetles. And when (as in Siam) the sun's rays beat with almost perpendicular directness, it is no trifling thing to be deprived of even the natural protection with which the skull is provided. Whatever can be done with fans toward shielding themselves, they do ; and, also, they can, by the same means, shut off their eyes from beholding vanity, so that a fan is a most important part of the sacerdotal outfit. Leaving the priests to group themselves in idle picturesqueness near the royal temple, we pass on by storehouses and treasuries and stables of the royal elephants, between sentries standing guard with European arms and in a semi-European uniform, to the armory, where I was to wait until the king was ready.

The messenger who had hitherto conducted me, was known among the foreign residents of Bangkok

as "Captain Dick"—a talkative person, with a shrewd eye to his own advancement. He spoke good English, and a good deal of it, and suggested, I remember, certain ways in which it would be possible for me to further his interests with the king. He had been at sea, and had perhaps commanded one of the king's sea-going vessels—his "captaincy" being rather maritime than military. He was quite disposed to join the embassy, which was at that time getting ready to be sent to Great Britain. He mentioned, incidentally, that a few of the naval buttons on my uniform would be a highly acceptable gift for me to offer him. The confidence and self-assurance with which he had borne himself, however, began perceptibly to wilt as we drew a little nearer to the august presence of royalty. And, at the armory, he made me over, in quite a humble manner, to the king's oldest son, who was to take me to his father. As I shook hands with the tall, manly, handsome youth who was waiting for me, I thought him worthy of his princely station. Kings' sons are not always the heirs of kingly beauty or of kingly virtues; but here was one who had, at least, the physical endowments which should fit him for the dignity to which he was born. He was almost the only man I saw in Siam whose teeth were not blackened nor his mouth distorted by the chewing of the betel-nut. For the betel-nut is in Siam what the tobacco-cud is in America, only it is not, I believe, quite so injurious to the chewer as the tobacco; while, on the other hand, its use is a little more universal. As between the two, for general offensiveness, I do not

know that there is anything to choose. But this young man was free from the stain of betel-nut, and I can not forbear the hope that he may have learned to govern himself so far in other things, that he may be fit to govern others. At any rate he has a kingly name—a more than kingly name. For the second king, seeking a significant name for his son, chose one which had been borne, not by an Asiatic, not by a European, but by the greatest of Americans—George Washington. “What’s in a name?” It may provoke a smile at first, that such a use should be made of the name of Washington, as if it were the whim of an ignorant and half-savage king. But when it shall appear, as I shall make it appear before I have finished, that this Siamese king understood and appreciated the character of the great man after whom he wished his son to be called, I think that no American will be content with laughing at him. I own that it moved me with something more than merely patriotic pride to hear the name of Washington honored in the remotest corner of the old world. It seemed to me significant of great progress already achieved towards Christian civilization, and prophetic of yet greater things to come.

But as the Prince George Washington walked on with me, and I revolved these great things in my mind, another turn was given to my thoughts. For when we had gone through a pleasant, shady court, and had come to the top of a flight of marble steps which took us to the door of the king’s house, (a plain and pleasant edifice of mason-work, like the residence of some private gentleman of wealth in our



own country,) I suddenly missed the young man from my side, and turned to look for him. What change had come over him! The man had been transformed into a reptile. The tall and graceful youth, princely in look and bearing, was down on all his marrow-bones, bending his head until it almost touched the pavement of the portico, and, crawling slowly toward the door, conducted me with reverent signs and whispers toward the king, his father, whom I saw coming to meet us.

This was the other side of the picture. And I draw out the incident in detail because it is characteristic of the strange conflict between the old barbarism and the new enlightenment which meets one at every turn, in the Land of the White Elephant. There are two tides—one is going out, the ebb-tide of ignorance, of darkness, of despotic power ; and one is coming in—the flood-tide of knowledge and liberty and all Christian grace. And, as in the whirl of waters where two currents meet, one never knows which way his boat may head, so sometimes the drift of things is backward toward the Orient, and sometimes forward, westward, as the “star of empire” moves. And one of the most striking evidences that the old is not yet “rung out,” is found in the servile degradation which superior rank or caste requires from all who are of lower station. Each rank has some who crawl like crocodiles beneath it, and is in its turn compelled to crawl before the higher. Nor are the members of a nobleman’s family exempt. I was introduced once to one of the wives of a fat,

good-natured prince, (a half-brother of the two kings,) who was crawling around, with her head downward, on the floor. I offered my hand as politely as was possible, and she shuffled up to shake it, and then shuffled off again into a corner. It was very queer—more so than when I shake hands with Trip, the spaniel, for then we both of us understand that it is a joke—but here it was a solemn and ceremonious act of politeness, and had to be performed with a straight face. The good lady has her revenge, however, and must enjoy it, when she sees her fat husband, clumsy, and almost as heavy as an elephant, get down on his hands and knees, as he has to, in the presence of his majesty the king. I have been told that, when the Siamese embassy to Great Britain was presented to the queen, before anybody knew what they were about, the ambassadors were down on all fours, at the entrance of the audience chamber, and insisted on crawling like mud-turtles into her majesty's presence. For, consistently enough, the court of Siam requires of foreigners only what etiquette requires in the presence of the king or president of their own country—but, when its representatives are sent to foreign courts, they carry their own usage with them. I felt a pardonable pride, and a little kindling of the "*Civis-Romanus-sum*" spirit, and an appreciable stiffening of the spinal column, as I walked straight forward, while Prince George Washington crawled beside me. Blessed was the man who walked uprightly.

Halleck, the sprightliest poet of his native

state, in verse which will be always dear to all who love that good old commonwealth, has told us how a true son of Connecticut

“ Would shake hands with a king upon his throne  
And think it kindness to his majesty.”

Of course, then, as the king came toward the portico and met us at the door, that was the thing to do, being also the etiquette at the court of James Buchanan, who then reigned at Washington. But not even that venerable functionary, whose manners I have been given to understand were one of his strong points, could have welcomed a guest with more gentlemanly politeness than that with which this king of a barbarous people welcomed me. He spoke good English, and spoke it fluently, and knew how, with gentlemanly tact, to put his visitor straightway at his ease. It was hard to believe that I was in a remote and almost unknown corner of the old world, and not in the new. The conversation was such as might take place between two gentlemen in a New York parlor. On every side were evidences of an intelligent and cultivated taste. The room in which we sat was decorated with engravings, maps, busts, statuettes. The book-cases were filled with well-selected volumes, handsomely bound. There were, I remember, various encyclopædias and scientific works. There was the Abbotsford edition of the Waverley novels, and a bust of the great Sir Walter overhead. There were some religious works, the gift, probably, of the American missionaries. And, as if his



majesty had seen the advertisements in the newspapers which implore a discriminating public to "get the best," there were two copies of Webster's quarto dictionary, unabridged. Moreover, the king called my particular attention to these two volumes, and, as if to settle the war of the dictionaries by an authoritative opinion, said: "I like it very much; I think it the best dictionary, better than any English." Accordingly the publishers are hereby authorized to insert the recommendation of the second king of Siam, with the complimentary notices of other distinguished critics, in their published advertisements. On the table lay a recent copy of the London *Illustrated News*, to which the king is a regular subscriber, and of which he is an interested reader. There was in it, I remember, a description, with diagrams, of some new invention of fire-arms, concerning which he wished my opinion, but he knew much more about it than I did. Some reference was made to my native city, and I rose to show on the map, which hung before me, where it was situated, but I found that he knew it very well, and especially that "they made plenty of guns there." For guns and military affairs he had a great liking, and indeed for all sorts of science. He was expert in his use of quadrant and sextant, and could take a lunar observation and work it out with accuracy. He had his army, distinct from the first king's soldiers, disciplined and drilled according to European tactics. Their orders were given in English and were obeyed with great alacrity. He had a band of Si-

amese musicians who performed on European instruments, though I am bound to say that their performance was characterized by force rather than by harmony. He made them play "Yankee Doodle," and "Hail Columbia," but if I enjoyed it, it was rather with a patriotic than with a musical enthusiasm. When they played their own rude music it was vastly better. But the imperfections of the band were of very small importance, compared with the good will which had prompted the king to make them learn the American national airs. That good will expressed itself in various ways. His majesty, who wrote an elegant autograph, kept up a correspondence with the captain of our ship for a long time after our visit. And when the captain, a few years later, had risen to the rank of Admiral, and had made the name of Foote illustrious in his country's annals, the king wrote to him, expressing his deep interest in the progress of our conflict with rebellion, and his sincere desire for the success of our national cause. When kings and peoples, bound to us by the ties of language and kindred and religion misunderstood us, and gave words of sneering censure, or else no words at all, as we were fighting with the dragon, this king of an Asiatic people, of different speech, of different race, of different religion, found words of intelligent and appreciative cheer for us. He had observed the course of our history, the growth of our nation, the principles of our government. And though we knew very little about him and his people, he was thoroughly informed concerning us. So that, as I talked with



THE PRESENT SECOND KING (GEORGE WASHINGTON).





him, and saw the refinement and good taste which displayed itself in his manners and in his dwelling, and the minute knowledge of affairs which his conversation showed, I began to wonder on what subjects I should find him ignorant. Once or twice I involuntarily expressed my amazement, and provoked a good-natured laugh from the king, who seemed quite to understand it.

And yet this gentlemanly and well-informed man was black. And he wore no trousers—the mention of which fact reminds me that I have not told what he did wear. First of all, he wore very little hair on his head, conforming in this respect to the universal fashion among his countrymen, and shaving all but a narrow ridge of hair between the crown and the forehead ; and this is cut off at the height of an inch, so that it stands straight up, looking for all the world like a stiff blacking-brush, only it can never be needed for such a purpose, because no Siamese wears shoes. I think the first king, when we called upon him, had on a pair of slippers, but the second king, if I remember, was barefooted—certainly he was barelegged. Wound about his waist and hanging to his knees was a scarf of rich, heavy silk, which one garment is the entire costume of ordinary life in Siam. The common people, of course, must have it of cheap cotton, but the nobles wear silk of beautiful quality and pattern, and when this is wound around the waist so that the folds hang to the knees, and the ends are thrown over the shoulders, they are dressed. On state occasions something is added to

this costume, and on all occasions there will be likely to be a wonderful display of jewels and of gold. So now, the light would flash once in a while from the superb diamond finger-rings which the king whom I am describing wore. He wore above his scarf a loose sack of dark-blue cloth, fastened with a few gold buttons, with a single band of gold-lace on the sleeves, and an inch or two of gold-lace on the collar. Half European, half Oriental in his dress, he had combined the two styles with more of good taste than one could have expected. It was characteristic of that transition from barbarism to civilization, upon which his kingdom is just entering.

The same process of transition and the same contrast between the two points of the transition was expressed in other ways. If it be true, for example, that cookery is a good index of civilization, there came in presently most civilized cakes and tea and coffee, as nicely made as if, by some mysterious dumb-waiter they had come down fresh from the restaurants of Paris. The king made the tea and coffee with his own hand, and with the conventional inquiry, "Cream and sugar?"—and the refreshments were served in handsome dishes of solid silver. Besides, I might have smoked a pipe, quite wonderful by reason of the richness of its ornament, or drunk his majesty's health in choice wines of his own importation. The refreshment which was furnished was elegant and ample, and, if taken as an index of civilization, indicated that the court of the White Elephant need not be ashamed, even



by the side of some that made much higher claims. But, on the other hand, while the lunch was going on, Prince George Washington and a great tawny dog who answered to the name of "Watch," lay prostrate with obsequious reverence on the floor, receiving with great respect and gratitude any word that the king might deign to fling to them. One or two nobleman were also present in the same attitude. Presently there came into the room one of the king's little children, a beautiful boy of three or four years old, who dropped on his knees and lifted his joined hands in reverence toward his father. It was quite the attitude that one sees in some of the pictures of "little Samuel,"—as if the king were more than man. After the child—whose sole costume consisted of a string or two of gold beads, jewelled, and perhaps a pair of bracelets—crawled his mother, who joined the group of prostrate subjects. The little boy, by reason of his tender age, was allowed more liberty than the others, and moved about almost as unembarrassed as the big dog "Watch;" but when he grows older, he will humble himself like the others. To see men and women degraded literally to a level with the beasts that perish, was all the more strange and sad by contrast with the civilization which was shown in the conversation and manners of the king, and in all the furniture of his palace. I half expected to see the portrait of the real George Washington on the wall blush with shame and indignation as it looked down on the reptile attitude of his namesake; and I felt a sensation of relief

when, at last, it became time for me to leave, and the young prince, crawling after me until we reached the steps, was once more on his legs.

But it seemed to me then, and a subsequent interview with the king confirmed the feeling, that I had been in one of the most remarkable palaces, and with one of the most remarkable men, in the world. Twice afterward I saw him ; once when our captain and a detachment of the officers of the ship waited upon him by his invitation, and spent a most agreeable evening, socially, enlivened with music by the band, and broadsword and musket exercise by a squad of troops, and refreshed by a handsome supper in the dining-room of the palace, on the walls of which hung engravings of all the American Presidents from Washington down to Jackson. I do not know who enjoyed the evening most ; the king, to whom the companionship of educated foreigners was a luxury which he could not always command, or we, to whom the strange spectacle which I have been trying to describe was one at which the more we gazed the more " the wonder grew." Indeed, we felt so pleasantly at home that when we said good-bye, and left the pleasant, comfortable, home-like rooms in which we had been sitting, the piano and the musical boxes, the cheery hospitality of our good-natured host, and dropped down the river to the narrow quarters of our ship, it was with something of the sadness which attends the parting from one's native land, when the loved faces on the shore grow dim and disappear, and the swelling can-

vas overhead fills and stiffens with the seaward wind.

But we had an opportunity of repaying something of the king's politeness, for, in response to an invitation of the captain, he did what no king had ever done before—came down the river and spent an hour or two on board our ship, (the U. S. sloop-of-war Portsmouth, Captain A. H. Foote commanding,) and was received with royal honors, even to the manning of the yards. We made him heartily welcome, and the captain gave the handsomest dinner which the skill of Johnson, his experienced steward, could prepare—that venerable colored person recognizing the importance of the occasion, and aware that he might never again be called upon to get a dinner for a king. The captain did not fail to ask a blessing as they drew about the table, taking pains to explain to his guest the sacred significance of that Christian act—for it was at such a time as this especially, that the good admiral was wont to show the colors of the “King Eternal” whom he served. The royal party carefully inspected the whole ship, with shrewd and intelligent curiosity, and before they left we hoisted the white elephant at the fore, and our big guns roared forth the king's salute. Nor was one visit enough, but the next day he came again, retiring for the night to the little steamer on which he had made the journey down the river from Bangkok. It was a little fussy thing, just big enough to hold its machinery and to carry its paddle-wheels, but was



dignified with the imposing name of "Royal Seat or Siamese Steam Force." It was made in the United States, and put together by one of the American missionaries in Bangkok. It was the only steamer in the Siamese waters, but it will doubtless prove to be the pioneer of many others that shall make the Meinam River lively with the stir of an increasing commerce.

We saw no more of the little steamer and its master, for, as the smoke of its funnel marked its progress up the river, we were busy with the stir of getting under way. It may be puffing up and down the river yet, but I cannot help a feeling of sadness as I remember that among the deaths of the year 1866 occurred the name of his majesty, the second king of Siam. The labor of writing out these recollections of him has been the more willingly undertaken, because it seemed to me only a fit acknowledgment of his intelligent friendship for America and the Americans. I suppose that, according to Siamese custom, his body was burned with great pomp and ceremony, and the ashes treasured up with appropriate reverence. Peace to his ashes, wherever they be! Let us hope that he has gone where good kings go.

At the death of the second king, his elder brother issued a royal document containing a biographical sketch and an estimate of his character. It is written in the peculiar style, pedantic and conceited, by which the first king's literary efforts are distinguished, but an extract from it deserves

on all accounts to be quoted. These two brothers, both of extraordinary talents, and, on the whole, of illustrious character and history, lived for the most part on terms of fraternal attachment and kindness, although some natural jealousy would seem to have grown up during the last few years of their lives, leading to the temporary retirement of the second king to a country-seat near Chieng Mai, in the hill-country of the Upper Meiam. Here he spent much of his time during his last years, and here he added to his harem a new wife, to whom he was tenderly attached. He returned to Bangkok to die, and was sincerely honored and lamented, not only by his own people, to whom he had been a wise and faithful friend and ruler, but also by many of other lands, to whom the fame of his high character had become known. His brother's "general order" announcing his decease, contains the following paragraph :

" He made everything new and beautiful and of curious appearance, and of a good style of architecture and much stronger than they had formerly been constructed by his three predecessors the second kings of the last three reigns, for the space of time that he was second king. He had introduced and collected many and many things, being articles of great curiosity, and things useful for various purposes of military arts and affairs, from Europe and America, China and other states, and planted them in various departments and rooms or buildings suitable for these articles, and placed officers for

maintaining and preserving the various things neatly and carefully. He has constructed several buildings in European fashion and Chinese fashion, and ornamented them with various useful ornaments for his pleasure, and has constructed two steamers in manner of men of war, and two steam-yachts and several rowing state-boats in Siamese and Cochin-China fashion, for his pleasure at sea and rivers of Siam; and caused several articles of gold and silver, being vessels and various wares and weapons, to be made up by the Siamese and Malayan goldsmiths, for employ and dress for himself and his family, by his direction and skillful contrivance and ability. He became celebrated and spread out more and more to various regions of the Siamese kingdom, adjacent states around, and far famed to foreign countries even at far distance, as he became acquainted with many and many foreigners, who came from various quarters of the world where his name became known to most as a very clever and bravest prince of Siam."

Much more of this royal document is quoted in Mrs. Leonowens' "English Governess at the Court of Siam."



## CHAPTER VIII.

PHRABAT SOMDETECH PHRA PARAMENDR MAHA  
MONGKUT.

**I**N some respects, the most conspicuous name in the history of the civilization of Siam will always be that of the king under whose enlightened and liberal administration of government the kingdom was thrown open to foreign intercourse, and the commerce, the science and even the religion of the western world accepted if not invited. His son, the present first king, is following in the steps of his father, and has already introduced some noteworthy reforms and changes, the importance of which is very great. But the way was opened for these changes by the wise and bold policy of the late king, whose death, in 1868, closed a career of usefulness which entitles him to a high place among the benefactors of his age.

A description of this king and of his court is furnished from the same editorial narrative from which the last two chapters have been chiefly quoted. It will be remembered that the period to which the narrative refers is the year 1857, the time of the visit of the "Portsmouth," with the ratification of the American treaty.

His majesty, the first king of Siam, kindly gives us our choice of titles by which, and of languages in which, he may be designated. To his own people he appears in an array of syllables sufficiently astonishing to our eyes and ears, as Phrabat Somdetch Phra Paramendr Maha Mongkut Phra Chau Klau Chau Yu Hud; but to outsiders he announces himself as simply the first king of Siam and its dependencies; or, in treaties and other official documents, as "Rex Major," or "Supremus Rex Siamensium." The Latin is his, not mine. And I am bound to acknowledge that the absolute supremacy which the "supremus" indicates is qualified by his recognition of the "blessing of highest and greatest superagency of the universe," by which blessing his own sovereignty exists. He has been quick to learn the maxim which monarchs are not ever slow to learn nor slow to use, that "Kings reign by the grace of God." And it is, to say the least, a safe conjecture that the maxim has as much power over his conscience as it has had over the consciences of some kings much more civilized and orthodox than he.

This polyglot variety of titles indicates a varied, though somewhat superficial learning. Before he came to the throne, the king had lived for several years in the seclusion of a Buddhist monastery. Promotion from the priesthood to the throne is an event so unusual in any country except Siam, that it might seem full of risk. But in this instance it has worked well. During the years of his monastic life he grew to be a thoughtful, studious man, and he brought with him to his kingly office a singular





THE LATE FIRST KING AND QUEEN.





gravity and dignity, and a wide familiarity with literature. Even now he loves to style himself "professor of Pali language and Buddhistical literature." And his priestly learning has borne good fruit already. For, when he came to test the Buddhistic cosmogony, with which he had become familiar in the monastery, by Christian science, he discovered that it could not stand, and accordingly he rejects it, retaining the ethical precepts of Buddhism, and defending them (as I am told) by the fact of their conformity to Christian ethics. I presume that his majesty did not learn Latin in his monastery, nor English either. But, chiefly by his intercourse with the missionaries he has acquired a fair knowledge of the one, and a practical and most valuable acquaintance with the other. He sent more than one long autograph letter, written in good English, to our government, during the negotiation of our treaty with him, and has taken various ways of expressing the interest and confidence of his "minor country" in a "superior powerful major country, such as the United States."

One proposal which he made, during the administration of President Lincoln, provoked some amusement when the correspondence containing it was laid before Congress and published in the newspapers. Mr. John Leech has depicted, in one of the most delightful of his sketches, the consternation of a British household when an "old gentleman, anxious that his wife should possess some trifle from the great exhibition of 1851, purchases (among other things) the stuffed elephant and the model of the

dodo." But his majesty of Siam proposed to send to us not one, but many pairs of elephants, and those not stuffed, but dreadfully alive. Two motives seem to have prompted him to this alarming generosity. He had heard that elephants were "regarded as the most remarkable of the large quadrupeds," and were exhibited for a price to throngs of wondering spectators. So to multiply them that they might be seen for nothing, would be an act for which generations of unborn Americans might bless the name (if they could pronounce it) of Somdetch Phra Paramendr Maha Mongkut. The oppressive monopoly of the menageries would be broken down; and to "see the elephant" would no longer be a phrase available for the figurative uses to which it has long been applied. Had the good king been permitted to carry out his plan, wild beasts might have become a drug in the market, and showmen might have been driven in despair to Congress, before their time. But there was another motive for the proposal. The king had heard that camels had been introduced as beasts of burden on the Western plains. But if there were Western plains that needed camels, there were also, he argued, Southern jungles in America that needed elephants. And whence could the supply so fitly come as from the land of the White Elephant, and from the king who had placed that serene quadruped upon his banner? This was his own view as he himself expressed it. "It has occurred to us," he says, "that if on the continent of America there should be several pairs of young male and female elephants turned loose in forests where was abundance of water



and grass, in any region under the sun's declination both north and south, called by the English the torrid zone, and all were forbidden to molest them, to attempt to raise them would be well; and, if the climate there should prove favorable to elephants, we are of opinion that after a while they will increase until there be large herds, as there are here on the continent of Asia, until the inhabitants of America will be able to catch and tame them and use them as beasts of burden, making them of benefit to the country, since elephants, being animals of great size and strength, can bear burdens and travel through woods and jungles where no cart-roads have yet been made." Having stated his proposal in this prolonged and complicated but amiable sentence, the king proceeds to give directions in detail for the care and management of the expected elephants. But the government of the United States felt bound to decline the offer, not deeming it feasible that the beasts should "be turned out to run wild" in any part of our Southern country. It was about that time that Mr. Artemus Ward had reported an experiment of the same sort with the wild animals of his "confiscated" show; and perhaps the acceptance of the king's proposal would have seemed to the President too much like a practical repetition of the great showman's imaginary adventure.

It is safe to say that the second king could not have made such a mistake as to suppose that the elephant scheme was a practicable one. But "rex supremus" has been so much occupied with the cares of government that his familiarity with foreign

countries is not so minute as was that of his younger brother, of whose character and acquirements some glimpse was furnished in the last chapter. He is a scholar, and knows the world through books rather than through men. And his manner of speaking English is less easy and accurate than his brother's was. But, on the other hand, the "pomp and circumstance" of his court was statelier and stranger, and is worthy of a better description. The second king received us with such gentlemanly urbanity and freedom, that it was hard to realize the fact that we were in the presence of royalty. But our reception by the first king was arranged on what the newspapers would call "a scale of Oriental magnificence," and it lingers in memory like some dreamy recollection of the splendors of the Arabian Nights.

One of the most singular illustrations of the ups and downs of nations and of races which history affords, is to be seen in the position of the Portuguese in Siam. They came there centuries ago as a superior race, in all the dignity and pride of discoverers, and with all the romantic daring of adventurous exploration. Now there is only a worn-out remnant of them left, degraded almost to the level of the Asiatics, to whom they brought the name and knowledge of the Western world. They have mixed with the Siamese, till, at the first, it is difficult to distinguish them as having European blood and lineage. But when we asked who the grotesque old creatures might be who came to us on messages from the king, or guided us when we went to see the wonders of the city, or superintended the cooking of

our meals, or performed various menial services about our dwelling, we found that they were half-breed descendants of the Portuguese who once flourished here. When we landed at the mouth of the river on our way to Bangkok for an audience with the king, one of the first persons whom we encountered was one of these demoralized Europeans. He made a ridiculous assertion of his lineage in the style of his costume. Disdaining the Siamese fashions, he had made for himself or had inherited a swallow-tailed coat of sky-blue silk, and pantaloons of purple silk, in which he seemed to feel himself the equal of any of us. Had any doubt as to his ancestry lingered in our minds, it must have been removed by a most ancient and honorable stove-pipe hat, which had evidently been handed down from father to son, through the generations, as a rusty relic of grander days. This old gentleman was in charge of a bountiful supply of provisions which the king had sent for us. Indeed, I suspect that they had been cooked under his personal supervision, for the cookery was as ambitious an imitation of European cookery as his costume was of European costume, and seemed to have a kind of ancient and hereditary mustiness. From time to time, during our stay, this old gentleman would reappear, chiefly in connection with culinary phenomena, and we saw our last of him only at the last banquet which the royal hospitality provided for us. It was hard not to moralize over the old man as the representative of a nation which had all the time been going backward since it led the van of dis-



covery in the Indies centuries ago ; while the people whom his ancestors found heathenish and benighted are starting on a career of improvement and elevation of which no man can prophesy the rate or the result.

The old Portuguese referred to would seem to be the same whom Sir John Bowring mentions in the following passage, and who has been so long a faithful servant of the government of Siam that his great age and long-continued services entitle him to a word of honorable mention, notwithstanding the droll appearance which he presented in his remarkable costume. Sir John Bowring, writing in 1856, says :

“ Among the descendants of the ancient Portuguese settlers in Siam, there was one who especially excited our attention. He was the master of the ceremonies at our arrival in Pakuam, and from his supposed traditional or hereditary acquaintance with the usages of European courts, we found him invested with great authority on all state occasions. He wore a European court dress, which he told me had been given him by Sir James Brooke, and which, like a rusty, old cocked hat, was somewhat the worse for wear. But I was not displeased to recognize in him a gentleman whom Mr. Crawford (the British ambassador in 1822) thus describes :

“ “ July 10th, (1822.) I had in the course of this forenoon a visit from a person of singular modesty and intelligence. Pascal Ribeiro de Alvergarias, the descendant of a Portuguese Christian of Kamboja. This gentleman holds a high Siamese title, and a

post of considerable importance. Considering his means and situation, his acquirements were remarkable, for he not only spoke and wrote the Siamese, Kambojan, and Portuguese languages with facility, but also spoke and wrote Latin with considerable propriety. We found, indeed, a smattering of Latin very frequent among the Portuguese interpreters at Bangkok, but Señor Ribeiro was the only individual who made any pretence to speak it with accuracy. He informed us that he was the descendant of a person of the same name, who settled at Kamboja in the year 1685. His lady's genealogy, however, interested us more than his own. She was the lineal descendant of an Englishman, of the name of Charles Lister, a merchant, who settled in Kamboja in the year 1701, and who had acquired some reputation at the court by making pretence to a knowledge in medicine. Charles Lister had come immediately from Madras, and brought with him his sister. This lady espoused a Portuguese of Kamboja, by whom she had a son, who took her own name. Her grandson, of this name also, in the revolution of the kingdom of Kamboja, found his way to Siam; and here, like his great-uncle, practicing the healing art, rose to the station of Maha-pet, or first physician to the king. The son of this individual, Cajitanus Lister, is at present the physician, and at the same time the minister and confidential adviser of the present king of Kamboja. His sister is the wife of the subject of this short notice. Señor Ribeiro favored us with the most authentic and satis-

factory account which we had yet obtained of the late revolution and present state of Kamboja.' ”

It is not safe always to judge by the appearance. This grotesque old personage, whom the narrative describes, represented a story of strange and romantic interest, extending through two centuries of wonderful vicissitude, and involving the blending of widely separated nationalities. But to resume the narrative :

When at last, after our stay in Bangkok was almost at an end, we were invited by “ *supremus rex* ” to spend the evening at his palace, we found our friend of the beaver hat and sky-blue coat and purple breeches in charge of a squad of attendants in one of the outer buildings of the court, where we were to beguile the time with more refreshments until his majesty should be ready for us. Everything about us was on a larger scale than at the second king's—the grounds more spacious, and the various structures with which they were filled, the temples, armories, and storehouses, of more ambitious size and style, but not so neat and orderly. A crowd of admiring spectators clustered about the windows of the room in which we were waiting, watching with breathless interest to see the strangers eat: so that as we sat in all the glory of cocked hats and epaulets, we had the double satisfaction of giving and receiving entertainment.

But presently there came a messenger to say that the king was ready for us. And so we walked on between the sentries, who saluted us with military exactness, and between the stately halls that



ran on either hand, until a large, closed gateway barred our way. Swinging open as we stood before them, the gates closed silently behind us, and we found ourselves in the august presence of "Rex Supremus Siamensium."

It might almost have been "the good Haroun Alraschid" and "the great pavilion of the caliph at inmost Bagdad," that we had come to, it was so imposing a scene, and so characteristically Oriental. What I had read of in the Arabian Nights, and hardly thought was possible except in such romantic stories, seemed to be realized. Here was a king worth seeing, a real king, with a real crown on, and with real pomp of royalty about him. I think that every American who goes abroad has a more or less distinct sense of being defrauded of his just rights when, in Paris or Berlin, for example, he goes out to see the king or emperor, and is shown a plainly-dressed man driving quietly and almost undistinguished among the throng of carriages. We feel that this is not at all what we came for, nor what we had been led to expect when, as schoolboys, we read about imperial magnificence and regal splendor, and the opulence of the "crowned heads." The crowned head might have passed before our very eyes, and we would not have known it if we had not been told. Not so in Bangkok. This was "a goodly king" indeed. And all the circumstances of time and place seemed to be so managed as to intensify the singular charm and beauty of the scene.

We stood in a large court, paved with broad, smooth slabs of marble, and open to the sky, which

was beginning to be rosy with the sunset. All about us were magnificent palace buildings, with shining white walls, and with roofs of gleaming green and gold. Broad avenues, with the same marble pavement, led in various directions to the temples and the audience halls. Here and there the dazzling whiteness of the buildings and the pavement was relieved by a little dark, tropical foliage ; and, as the sunset grew more ruddy every instant,

‘ A sudden splendor from behind  
Flushed all the leaves with rich gold green,’

and tinged the whole bright court with just the necessary warmth of color. There was the most perfect stillness, broken only by the sound of our footsteps on the marble, and, except ourselves, not a creature was moving. Here and there, singly or in groups, about the spacious court, prostrate, with faces on the stone, in motionless and obsequious reverence, as if they were in the presence of a god and not of a man, grovelled the subjects of the mighty sovereign into whose presence we were approaching. It was hard for the stoutest democrat to resist a momentary feeling of sympathy with such universal awe ; and to remember that, after all, as Hamlet says, a “ king is a thing . . . of nothing.” So contagious is the obsequiousness of a royal court and so admirably effective was the arrangement of the whole scene.

The group toward which we were advancing was a good way in front of the gateway by which we had entered. There was a crouching sword-

bearer, holding upright a long sword in a heavily embossed golden scabbard. There were other attendants, holding jewel-cases or elegant betel-nut boxes—all prostrate. There were others still ready to crawl off in obedience to orders, on whatever errands might be necessary. There were three or four very beautiful little children, the king's sons, kneeling behind their father, and shining with the chains of jewelled gold which hung about their naked bodies. More in front there crouched a servant holding high a splendid golden canopy, beneath which stood the king. He wore a grass-cloth jacket, loosely buttoned with diamonds, and a rich silken scarf, which, wound about the waist, hung gracefully to his knees. Below this was an unadorned exposure of bare shins, and his feet were loosely slippered. But on his head he wore a cap or crown that fairly blazed with brilliant gems, some of them of great size and costly value. There was not wanting in his manner a good deal of natural dignity; although it was constrained and embarrassed. It was in marked contrast with the cheerful and unceremonious freedom of the second king. He seemed burdened with the care of government and saddened with anxiety, and as if he knew his share of the uneasiness of "the head that wears a crown."

"He stood in conversation with us for a few moments, and then led the way to a little portico in the Chinese style of architecture, where we sat through an hour of talk, and drink, and jewelry, mixed in pretty equal proportions. For there were some details of business in connection with the treaty that



required to be talked over. And there were sentiments of international amity to be proposed and drunk after the Occidental fashion. And there were the magnificent royal diamonds and other gems to be produced for our admiring inspection—great emeralds of a more vivid green than the dark tropical foliage, and rubies and all various treasures which the Indian mines afford, till the place shone before our eyes, thicker

‘ With jewels than the sward with drops of dew,  
When all night long a cloud clings to the hill,  
And with the dawn ascending lets the day  
Strike where it clung ; so thickly shone the gems.’

All the while the nobles were squatting or lying on the floor, and the children were playing in a subdued and quiet way at the king's feet. Somehow the beauty of these little Siamese children seemed to me very remarkable. As they grow older, they grow lean, and wrinkled, and ugly. But while they are children they are pretty “as a picture”—as some of those pictures, for example, in the Italian galleries. Going quite innocent of clothing, they are very straight and plump in figure, and unhindered in their grace of motion. And they used to bear themselves with a simple and modest dignity that was very winning. They have the soft and lustrous eyes, the shining teeth, (as yet unstained by betel-nut,) the pleasant voices, which are the birthright of the children of the tropics. In default of clothes, they are stained all over with some pigment, which makes their skin a lively yellow, and furnishes a

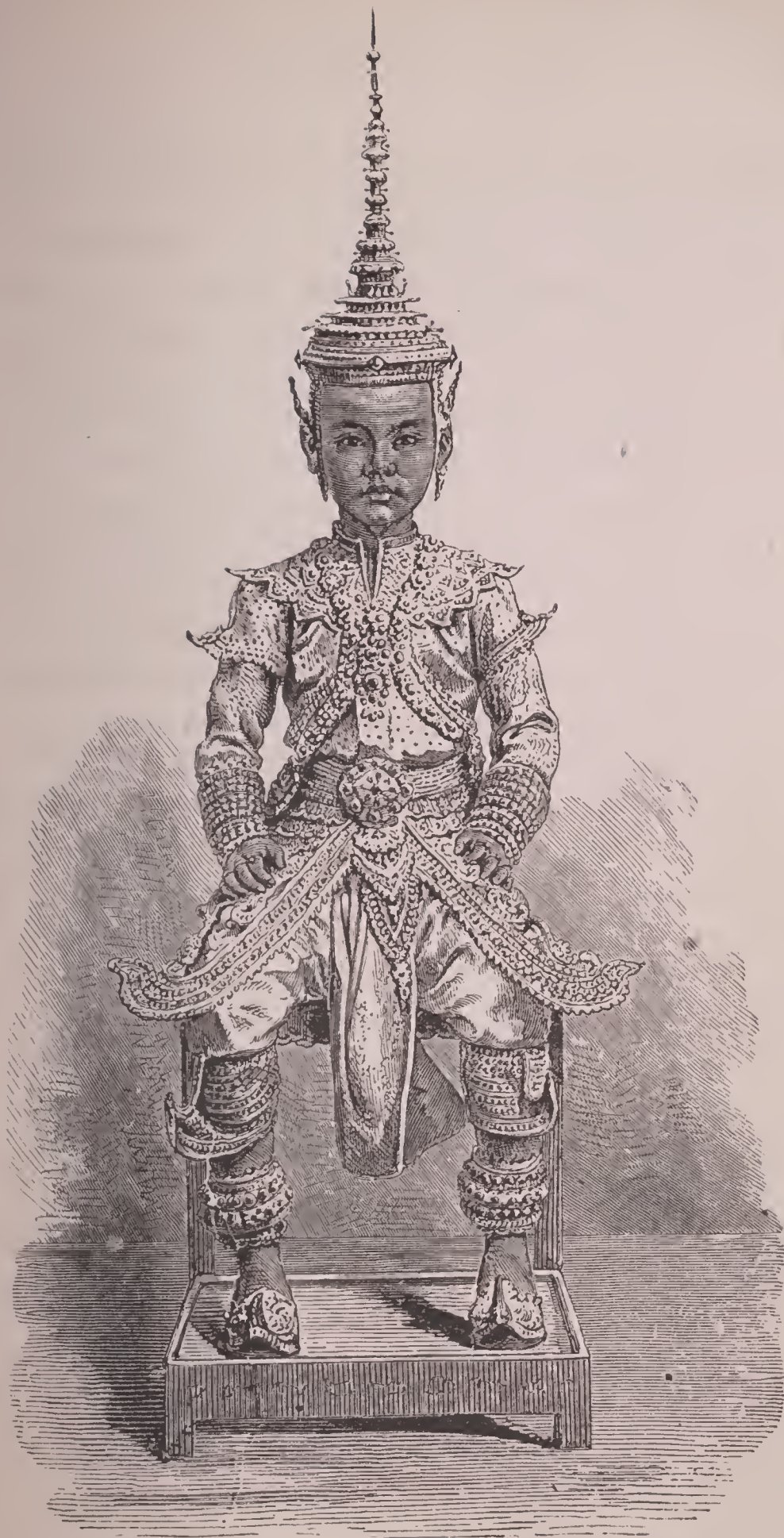
shade of contrast for the deeper color of the gold which hangs around their necks and arms. I used to compare them, to their great advantage, with the Chinese children. It is said that in some parts of China, when a child is weaned, the first animal food that is given him must be a goose's head, in the hope that he may thus acquire the haughty and dignified bearing of that noble bird. And I used to think that the Chinese had been successful to the utmost limit of their ambition in acquiring the coveted style. From a very tender age the Chinese child is ludicrous. But these little children of the king, like all the children of the Siamese nobility, were patterned after a different ideal. Partly, no doubt, the contrast of their freedom with the reptile attitude of all the grown-up people in the presence of the king, made them seem manlier and nobler. But it is certain that the picturesque group that filled the portico where we were sitting, would have lacked much of its charm and beauty if the little folks had not been present. Playing, unhindered by the fear of royal dignity, and unembarrassed by the ceremonious stiffness of a royal audience, while the nobles crouched like beasts, and crawled like snakes around us, their presence supplied that "touch of nature," which made us all, of whatsoever race or rank or language, "kin."

The contrast between these children and their neighbors of China might be extended further. There is not in Siam, at least there is not in the same degree, that obstinate conceit behind which, as behind a barrier, the Chinese have stood for cen-

turies, resisting stubbornly the entrance of all light and civilization from without. I do not know what possible power could extort from a Chinese official the acknowledgment which this king freely made, that his people were "half civilized and half barbarous, being very ignorant of civilized and enlightened customs and usages." Such an admission from a Chinaman would be like the demolition of their great northern wall. It is true of nations as it is of individuals, that pride is the most stubborn obstacle in the way of all real progress. And national humility is the earnest of national exaltation. Therefore it is that the condition of things at the Siamese court seems to me so full of promise.

By and by the king withdrew, and intimated that he would presently meet us again at an entertainment in an other part of the palace. His disappearance was the signal for the resurrection of the prostrate noblemen, who started up all around us in an unexpected way, like toads after a rain. Moving toward the new apartment where our "entertainment" was prepared, we saw the spacious court to new advantage. For the night had come while we had waited, and the mellow light from the tropic stars and burning constellations flowed down upon us through the fragrant night air. Mingling with this white star light was the ruddy light that came through palace windows from lamps fed by fragrant oil of cocoa-nut, and from the moving torches of our attendants. And as we walked through the broad avenues dimly visibly in this mixed light, some gilded window arch or overhanging





ONE OF THE SONS OF THE LATE FIRST KING.



roof with gold-green tiles, or the varied costume of the moving group of which we formed a part, would stand out from the shadowy darkness with a sudden and most picturesque distinctness. So we came at last to the apartment where the king had promised to rejoin us.

Here the apparition of our old sky-blue friend, the beaver-hatted Portuguese, suggested that a dinner was impending, and, if we might judge by his uncommon nervousness of manner, it must be a dinner of unprecedented style. And certainly there was a feast, sufficiently sumptuous and very elegantly served, awaiting our arrival. At one side of the room, on a raised platform, was a separate table for the king, and beside it, awaiting his arrival, was his throne.

“ From which  
Down dropped in many a floating fold,  
Engarlanded and diapered  
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.”

In the bright light of many lamps the room was strangely beautiful. On one side, doors opened into a stately temple, out of which presently the king came forth. And as, when he had disappeared, the nobles seemed to come out from the ground like toads, so now, like toads, they squatted, and the sovereign of the squatters took his seat above them.

Presently there was music. A band of native musicians stationed at the foot of the king's throne commenced a lively performance on their instruments. It was strange, wild music, with a plaintive sweetness, that was very enchanting. The tones



were liquid as the gurgling of a mountain brook, and rose and fell in the same irregular measure. And when to the first band of instruments there was added another in a different part of the room, the air became tremulous with sweet vibrations, and the wild strains lingered softly about the gilded eaves and cornices and floated upward toward the open sky.

It seemed that the fascination of the scene would be complete if there were added the poetry of motion. And so, in came the dancers, a dozen young girls, pretty and modest, and dressed in robes of which I cannot describe the profuse and costly ornamentation. The gold and jewels fairly crusted them, and, as the dancers moved, the light flashed from the countless gems at every motion. As each one entered the apartment, she approached the king, and, reverently kneeling, slowly lifted her joined hands as if in adoration. All the movements were gracefully timed to the sweet barbaric music, and were slow and languid, and as quiet as the movements in a dream. We sat and watched them dreamily, half bewildered by the splendor which our eyes beheld, and the sweetness which our ears heard, till the night was well advanced and it was time to go. It was a sudden shock to all our Oriental reveries, when, as we rose to leave, his majesty requested that we would give him three cheers. It was the least we could do in return for his royal hospitality, and accordingly the captain led off in the demonstration, while the rest of us joined in with all the heartiness of voice that we could summon. But

it broke the charm. Those occidental cheers, that hoarse Anglo-Saxon roar, had no proper place among these soft and sensuous splendors, which had held us captive all the evening, till we had well-nigh forgotten the every-day world of work and duty to which we belonged.

Even now I sometimes think I know the glorious Lotos land of which the poet sings. And if I am ever skeptical about the wonders of the Arabian Nights, I remember that I have myself been among them, and have seen them with my own eyes, and so they must be true. It was hard to leave the splendor of the tropics and the pomp of the king's court, and all the various wonders of the kingdom of the White Elephant, for "the wandering fields of barren foam:" doubly hard to go from this graceful barbarism to the stiff and wooden semi-civilization of China. And as we saw the palm-trees at the mouth of the Meinam dwindle to specks on the horizon, and the blue hills of Chantiboun grow thin and faint with the increasing distance, it was as when, with a great sigh of overstrained attention and enjoyment, one rises from the sound of some great music, and comes slowly back to the ordinary humdrum routine of daily life.

It is when we remember the enervating influence of the drowsy tropics upon character, that we learn fitly to honor the men and women by whom the inauguration of this new era in Siamese history has been brought about. To live for a little while among these sensuous influences without any very serious intellectual work to do, or any very grave moral responsibility to bear, is one thing; but to

spend a life among them, with such a constant strain upon the mind and heart as the laying of Christian foundations among a heathen people must always necessitate, is quite another thing. This is what the missionaries in Siam have to do. Their battle is not with the prejudices of heathenism only, nor with the vices and ignorance of bad men only. It is a battle with nature itself. To the passing traveller, half intoxicated with the beauty of the country and the rich splendor of that oriental world, it may seem a charming thing to live there, and no uninviting lot to be a missionary in such pleasant places. But the very attractiveness of the field to one who sees it as a visitor, and who is dazzled by its splendors as he looks upon it out of kings' palaces, is what makes it all the harder for one who goes with hard, self-sacrificing work to do. The fierce sun wilts the vigor of his mind and scorches up the fresh enthusiasm of his heart.

“Droops the heavy-blossomed flower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree.”

And all the beautiful earth, and all the drowsy air, and all the soft blue sky invite to sloth and ease and luxury.

Therefore I give the greater honor to the earnest men and to the patient women who are laboring and praying for the coming of the Christian day to this benighted people.

His majesty, Phrabat Somdetch Phra Paramendr Maha Mongkut closed his remarkable career on the 1st of October, 1868, under circum-



stances of peculiar interest. Amid all the cares and anxieties of government, he had never ceased to occupy himself with matters of literary and scientific importance. Questions of scholarship in any one of the languages of which he was more or less master were always able to divert and engage his attention. And the approach of the great solar eclipse in August, 1868, was an event, the coming of which he had himself determined by his own reckoning, and for which he waited with an impatience half philosophic and half childish. A special observatory was built for the occasion, and an expedition of extraordinary magnitude and on a scale of great expenditure and pomp was equipped by the king's command to accompany him to the post of observation. A great retinue both of natives and of foreigners, including a French scientific commission, attended his majesty, and were entertained at royal expense. And the eclipse was satisfactorily witnessed to the great delight of the king, whose scientific enthusiasm found abundant expression when his calculation was proved accurate.

It was, however, almost his last expedition of any kind. Even before setting out there had been evident signs that his health was breaking. And upon his return it was soon apparent that excitement and fatigue and the malaria of the jungle had wrought upon him with fatal results. He died calmly, preserving to the end that philosophic composure to which his training in the Buddhist priesthood had accustomed him. His private life in his own pal-

ace and among his wives and children, has been pictured in an entertaining way by Mrs. Leonowens, the English lady whose services he employed as governess to his young children. He had apparently his free share of the faults and vices to which his savage nature and his position as an Oriental despot, with almost unlimited wealth and power, gave easy opportunity. It is therefore all the more remarkable that he should have exhibited such sagacity and firmness in his government, and such scholarly enthusiasm in his devotion to literature and science. Pedantic he seems to us often, and with more or less arrogant conceit of his own ability and acquirements. It is easy to laugh at the queer English which he wrote with such reckless fluency and spoke with such confident volubility. But it is impossible to deny that his reign was, for the kingdom which he governed, the beginning of a new era ; and that whatever advance in civilization the country is now making, or shall make, will be largely due to the courage and wisdom and willingness to learn which he enforced by precept and example. He died in some sense a martyr to science, while at the same time he adhered, to the last, tenaciously, and it would seem from some imaginary obligation of honor, to the religious philosophy in which he had been trained, and of which he was one of the most eminent defenders. His character and his history are full of the strangest contrasts between the heathenish barbarism in which he was born and the Christian civilization

toward which, more or less consciously, he was bringing the people whom he governed. It is in part the power of such contrasts which gives to his reign such extraordinary and picturesque interest.



## CHAPTER IX.

### SIR HARRY ORD'S VISIT TO HUA-WAN—THE GREAT ECLIPSE—AN ASTRONOMICAL FETE.

THE late king lost his life, as was stated in the last chapter, in consequence of the exposure and excitement incident to his expedition to Hua-wan at the time of the solar eclipse of 1868. An account of this expedition, and description of the king as he appeared at the close of his reign, is copied in the Bangkok Calendar of 1870, and is from the pen of one of the suite of Sir Harry St. George Ord, the governor of Singapore and of the British Straits settlements. He was by special invitation a guest of the king, and especial interest attaches to his visit from the circumstances in which, and the time at which it was made.

“ Hua-wan is a village situated within Siamese territory, on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula, in lat.  $11^{\circ} 38' N.$ , and long.  $99^{\circ} 39' E.$ , and almost at the foot of the mountain Kow Luan, 4,236 feet high. The king of Siam, whose scientific acquirements are well known, had taken a great interest in the eclipse of the sun, which it was calcu-

lated would happen on the 18th August, and as the line of the central eclipse passed very near this spot, which was also the place on the earth's surface where the maximum duration of totality would be attained, his majesty determined to go there and select a site in its immediate neighborhood for the observation of this phenomenon. Accompanied by the court and a large number of his principal officers, the king proceeded to Hua-wan in the beginning of August, and established his residence at a place on the sea-shore, a few miles to the south of it, and immediately in the direct line of the sun's path. He also permitted the French government to send thither a body of scientific observers who had been dispatched from Paris with the view of witnessing the eclipse as nearly as possible in the spot where it would be of the longest duration.

“The king, also with great consideration, suggested to Mr. Alabaster, her Britannic majesty's acting consul at Siam, that perhaps his excellency Sir Harry Ord, the governor of the Straits settlements, might feel disposed to take advantage of his majesty's being within a somewhat shorter distance of Singapore to pay him a visit at Hua-wan, where he could have the opportunity of witnessing the eclipse under very favorable circumstances and of making the acquaintance of the king and his court. His majesty graciously added, that he desired to have the pleasure of meeting Sir Harry Ord, and that he would do all in his power to render his visit agreeable. Circumstances at this time rendering it

desirable for the governor to communicate personally with the rajahs of Pahang and Tringanu, on the eastern coast of the Peninsula, and his excellency, finding that by slightly extending his journey he would be able to see the eclipse and make the acquaintance of the king and his court, he at once requested the consul to inform his majesty that he would have the honor of accepting the invitation so graciously made to him.

“ But little time was afforded to make preparations for the scientific observation of the phenomena attending the eclipse, but with the assistance of Major McNair, the colonial engineer, such instruments as were attainable were procured, and it was resolved that no opportunity of turning them to account should be neglected.

“ On the night of the 12th August, his excellency left Singapore in the colonial steamer *Pei-Ho*. Lady Ord also accompanied his excellency. An extremely good passage was made considering the season of the year ; the steamer anchored about 45 miles below Hua-wan on the night of the 15th instant, and reached the anchorage on the following morning, where were found H. I. M.'s ships *Sarthe* and *Frelon*, H. S. M.'s ships *Impregnable*, *Siam Supporter*, and *Chow Phya*, the royal yacht, and several gunboats and other vessels. H. M.'s ships *Satellite*, Captain Edye, and *Grasshopper*, Lieutenant Philpotts, arrived the following morning, Captain Edye who was on his way to Hong-kong, having at the governor's request deviated from his course that a British ship-of-war might



be present on the occasion to display the flag and return salutes.

“ The site selected for occupation was a portion of the sea-beach, which prior to the arrival of the Siamese had been covered with jungle. This had been cleared and numerous houses erected for the accommodation of the various officers of the court and the European guests. The king occupied a temporary palace of wood containing three stories, it being contrary to Siamese customs for an inferior to live over, or in the king's case on a level with his superior. The other houses were of one story, but the apartments were all raised three feet above the level of the ground. They were built almost exclusively of split bamboos and covered with the ordinary thatch of the country, ‘ attap ’ or dried palm leaves. Each was surrounded by a neat fence of branches of trees impervious to observation, and the compound or court-yard contained numerous apartments for servants and followers.

“ The governor and suite landed on the morning of the 17th, under a salute fired by a field battery which the king had brought from Bangkok, and being received by Mr. Alabaster, her Britannic majesty's acting consul at Bangkok, the members of the consulate, and some Siamese officials, were conducted to the residence of his excellency Chow Phya Sri Sury Wongse the kalahome, or prime minister as he is generally termed. According to the Siamese etiquette it is usual for strangers to call first on the minister for foreign affairs, and afterwards on the prime minister, by whom, if of suf-

ficient rank, they are introduced to the king, but as the foreign minister resided at some distance from the kalahome, the latter with much consideration arranged that his excellency's reception by both of them should take place at the same time in his house.

“ The kalahome is a gentleman of about sixty years of age, somewhat short in stature, with a keen eye and dignified presence ; it would be difficult to give a better description of his character than that which Sir J. Bowring furnishes in the history of his mission to Siam in 1855. ‘ The personal character of the prime minister is to me an object of much admiration. He is the most distinguished man of the greatest family in the empire : he was the main instrument which placed the present king upon the throne against the claims of the late king's son, and was made prime minister. He has again and again told me that if my policy is to save the people from oppression and the country from monopoly, he shall labor with me, and if I succeed my name will be blest to all ages. He unveils abuses to me without disguise, and often with vehement eloquence. If he prove true to his profession, he is one of the noblest and most enlightened patriots the Oriental world has ever seen.’

“ The kalahome has fully established, during the thirteen years which have elapsed since the foregoing was written, his claims to be considered a noble and enlightened patriot. Possessing the fullest power, for the king is understood to do nothing without his concurrence, he rules with moderation

and prudence, keeping himself well informed of all that passes in other countries. He is apparently much attached to the English, speaking the language with considerable facility. He is simple in his manner, and straightforward in the expression of his opinions, and exhibits very great energy in the transaction of public business.

“The governor and suite were received by the kalahome and foreign minister at the entrance of the court-yard, and were conducted to the house where seats were provided for the party. Tea and refreshments were served, and the minister and the governor had a long conversation whilst arrangements were being made for his reception by the king. The consul, who speaks Siamese fluently, acted as interpreter, but in many cases, the kalahome replied to Sir Harry Ord’s observations without Mr. Alabaster’s aid. The foreign minister took less part in the conversation. A discussion arising respecting fire-arms, the kalahome produced specimens of the Sneider, Mont-Storm, and other modern breech-loading weapons, and showed himself fully conversant with their mechanism.

“It was here that, for the first time, we noticed the rigid observance of the Siamese custom that an inferior may not stand in the presence of a superior. All the Siamese were seated or lying on the ground, and servants when presenting refreshments carried the tray in their hands whilst they shuffled along the ground on their knees. It was curious to see the instantaneous change in the demeanor of Siamese who entered the court from without, ignorant



of what was passing inside. Lounging in with easy carelessness, on beholding the kalahome they dropped instantly into a kneeling posture, joining their hands in front of the face and bowing the forehead to the ground, they remained kneeling or seated according to their rank. On being spoken to, their reply was accompanied with the same reverence and prostration, and on leaving the presence, although they generally rose to their feet, the legs were never straightened and the body was always kept bowed in a stooping posture.

“ After some delay, word was brought that the king was waiting to receive the governor, and we proceeded to the temporary palace. At the entrance to the courtyard a guard of honor was drawn up which presented arms, and on entering the court we were received by some of the principal officers, who, with the kalahome and foreign minister and their suites, preceded us to the hall of audience. This was a chamber, perhaps eighty feet long and thirty feet broad, forming the eastern end of the palace : there was a door at each end, as well as in the centre of the longer side through which we were introduced. On entering, we found the whole surface of the floor covered with Siamese prostrate on the ground with their hands directed towards the king, who was seated on a chair placed on a platform, raised about three feet above the floor, and immediately in front of the door leading to the interior of the palace. The platform and its railing, and the pillars and walls of the apartment were hung with crimson cloth, and at his majesty's right hand

A FEW OF THE CHILDREN OF THE LATE FIRST KING.







was a small table covered with gold boxes and vessels for containing betel, tobacco, water, etc. A narrow space between the door and the king's throne was kept free, and on either side of this and about midway were prostrated the two chief ministers. In conformity with the customs of the court, our place was in a line between these officials, no one being permitted to make a nearer approach to the king than his own highest officers; we accordingly halted on this spot, but his majesty at once beckoned to Sir Harry Ord to approach, and having shaken hands with him, had the whole of his suite introduced to him. An officer called the king's mouth-piece proceeded to proclaim in a loud voice the nature and object of the governor's visit, but after a short time the king remarked that there had been enough of this, and speaking in English, made an address in which he expressed the pleasure it gave him to receive the governor, and spoke of the cordial relations existing between his own country and Great Britain, and his wish that they might continue.

“ At the conclusion of his speech, the king descended from the throne and took his seat on another, which was raised outside the building immediately in front of the door of entrance, when some photographs of the scene were taken by the photographer we had brought with us. On taking our leave with the same ceremonies which had accompanied our introduction, his majesty expressed his wish to receive his excellency at a private audience the same evening.

“ We then proceeded to the house prepared for us, where we found Lady Ord and Mr. Plow, who had landed shortly after us. The building, whose construction has been described, was about one hundred and forty feet long and fifty feet wide, and consisted of two separate buildings. The larger had, on the level of the ground, a saloon capable of dining forty or fifty people, and on either side, raised about three feet, a range of small rooms, twelve in all, for the occupation of the members of the governor's suite. At the further end was a small building containing two bed-rooms and dressing-rooms, the veranda forming a convenient sitting-room in which visitors were received. This part of the house was boarded and floored with wood, the other being made entirely of split bamboos.

“ On arriving, the governor was waited upon by P'ra-P'asi-Sombat-Boriboon, the Siamese official to whom was intrusted the duty of catering for the king's guests, and his excellency was informed that a table for as many persons as he might think proper to invite would be provided at such hours as he might appoint, and a hope was expressed that nothing would be found wanting which could minister to the comfort of his excellency and suite. A French *chef* was then introduced, who, with an Italian and numerous native assistants, were instructed to attend to all the requirements of the party, and most liberally and luxuriously were they supplied. Singapore and Bangkok had been ransacked to procure all the delicacies attainable in this climate, and excellent cooking with various

wines and plenty of ice, left nothing to be desired in this respect. Captain Edye and several officers of the navy, Mr. and Mrs. Alabaster, Mrs. Campbell, and the members of the consulate, formed an agreeable addition to our party, which certainly never anticipated finding such luxurious accommodation in a Siamese jungle.

“The day was passed in making preparation for the observation of the eclipse on the morrow, and his excellency received visits from the kalahome and principal officers of state. About 9 P. M. the whole party, including the ladies, proceeded to the palace, at the entrance of which they were received by the king and conducted by him to the private apartments where they were introduced to the ladies of the court, and the young princesses. There is not at present any queen of Siam, her late majesty having died in 1852, and although the king has numerous wives, none of them has been raised to the rank of queen. There are between sixty and seventy children, of whom the four eldest are princesses Ying Yawlacks, Dacksinja, and Somawati, each of whom is about sixteen years of age, and prince Chowfa Chulalongkorn, who is about fifteen. Prince Chowfa Chulalongkorn is a very intelligent youth, tall and forward for his years ; the elder princesses are very nice looking, and were it not for the stained teeth which Siamese custom inexorably demands, would be decidedly handsome young women. They are possessed of very pleasing, engaging manners, and speak English, as indeed do most of the royal children, the king having provided them with an Eng-



lish governess. The governor and the ladies of the party having been introduced to the ladies of the household, we seated ourselves round a centre table when tea and coffee, cakes and sweetmeats were served, and after a stay of half an hour we descended from the apartment, (which being for the royal use, was situated at the top of the palace,) into the audience chamber, where a dance somewhat similar to an Indian nautch was performed by some elaborately attired young girls belonging to the court, and who are specially trained for the purpose. The music was Siamese, and consisted of flutes, drums, a sort of guitar, and an instrument composed of flat pieces of sonorous wood beaten with a hammer. It was not unmelodious. About 11 P. M. his majesty permitted us to retire.

“The morning of the 18th August broke with dense masses of clouds coming up from the S. W., and this continued without intermission until 9 o'clock, when a slight fall of rain took place. The sun was up to this time quite overshadowed, and the weather was generally so unsettled as to hold out but little prospect of any probable change before noon. An hour later, however, the wind increased in force from the S. W., and at 10h. 5m. was noticed a slight break in the clouds to the westward, from which quarter the sky shortly afterwards began to be clear, and at 10h. 35m. the sun, which had been hitherto entirely obscured, shone forth, but eclipsed on the western limb by nearly one fourth of its diameter; we were therefore unable to note the actual time of first contact, which was expected to take

place at 10h. 4m. The weather from this time became more settled, the lower or nimbus cloud entirely disappeared, and the sky was left clear and bright in the zenith, while, but few clouds were visible above  $30^{\circ}$  from the horizon, and these cirro-cumulus, thus affording a satisfactory indication that for some time at least a clear sky might be looked for."

The observations of the eclipse by the various scientific parties engaged, the Siamese, French and English, were remarkably successful, but the details, as given in the present narrative, need not be quoted. The writer resumes :

"Late in the afternoon we were surprised by a sudden announcement that the king was coming to visit the governor. The kalahome, who seemed to have had as short notice of his majesty's intention as Sir Harry Ord, and to be as much astonished as we were at this extraordinary departure from Siamese etiquette, came in and staid with the governor to receive the king. There was no time for any preparation, and we were obliged to remain in our ordinary costume. His majesty arrived at 5 P. M. in a chair, or rather short couch, borne by eight men, on which he sat with his legs crossed in front, and with two of the little princes, one on either side. A band of music and a guard of honor with two mountain guns preceded him. At his side walked several of the princes, followed by some of the princesses in a carriage, accompanied by a crowd of officials and servants. Chairs had been placed at the entrance of the house, but his majesty, passing them

by, walked through the building to the governor's apartments at the upper end, where he seated himself between Sir Harry and Lady Ord, the members of the court remaining prostrated on the ground below, with the exception of the kalahome, who reclined in a respectful but subservient attitude on the lower of the steps leading to the raised floor of the house.

“The king, who was in a very good humor, his calculations of the time of the eclipse having proved extremely correct, (report said more so than those of the European observers,) talked a good deal, chiefly in English, expressing a hope that his excellency was pleased with his visit and found everything that he required. The young princesses amused themselves with some photograph books, and after a stay of half an hour, his majesty took his departure, requesting that we would visit him the same evening to witness another theatrical performance.

“About 10 o'clock, his excellency and the gentlemen of the party proceeded to the palace, where they found the king engaged in witnessing a sort of theatrical entertainment by a number of young girls dressed in very gorgeous costumes. There were also present several of the officers of the French ships of war, and the members of the French expedition, as well as some of the European officers in his majesty's service, and others. The performance, in which the king appeared to be much interested, consisted of a sort of ballet, the motions of which were however very slow and not very graceful, executed to the sound of the native band before alluded



to. Besides this band the king has at least one very fair band on the European model, and the kallahome is the possessor of one which he very kindly sent to play during dinner on the first day of our arrival, and which performed a selection of dance and operatic music in a highly creditable manner. After witnessing the dancing for some time, the king called up the different performers and explained their characters, stating in most instances who they were. It was curious to find that many of them were daughters of governors of provinces, and noblemen in the king's service, but it appears that daughters are not looked upon as of very great value, and that it is considered a fortunate circumstance if they can be got rid of by quartering them on the royal household, where their talents would seem to be turned to account in any profitable or useful manner. It has been remarked that the king appeared to take a great interest in these performances, in the intricate evolutions of which he seemed quite at home, and we were given to understand that he sometimes continues amusing himself with them until a very late hour in the night. On the present occasion, his majesty acknowledged that he was tired with his labors during the day in observing the eclipse, and permitted us to take our leave early.

“The next morning, in obedience to a royal summons, we again proceeded to the palace, where efforts were made to obtain some more photographs of the king and the members of the governor's party, as mementoes of our visit, but through some defect

in the appliances, our photographer's efforts were not as successful on this occasion as on others.

“The king then expressed his wish that Sir Harry and Lady Ord should take leave of the royal ladies, and accompanied by Captain Edye and Major McNair, they were introduced by the king into the interior of the palace, where they found the chief members of the household, very handsomely attired in dresses of cloth of gold, and decked with numerous ornaments. Refreshments were served by the elder princesses, and the king held a long communication in English with the governor, in which he repeated his expression of the pleasure it had been to him to make the acquaintance of his excellency and Lady Ord, and his hope that the most friendly relations would always exist between the two governments. Whilst the governor was engaged with the king, the members of his party were entertained in the audience chamber by the princes and princesses, who distributed their cards and photographs amongst them, and expressed the hope that the king would visit Singapore, and give them the opportunity of enjoying such unwonted relaxation from the strictness of their every day life.

“On taking our departure, his majesty shook hands with the whole party, and after endeavoring to persuade a youthful midshipman to take service with him as private secretary, he took leave of his excellency with very great warmth of manner, expressing his hope that he might be able some day to visit him at Bangkok, and inquiring whether if he went to Singapore his excellency would be pleased

to receive him ; to which Sir Harry Ord replied, that nothing would give him more gratification than to be honored by a visit from his majesty.

“ As soon as we left the palace, the king embarked in the royal yacht, and proceeded to Bangkok. Immediately after the king had left the shore, all the Siamese officials, the consular party, and other Europeans embarked in the different steamers appropriated to their use, and followed his majesty to Bangkok. The *Satellite* and *Grasshopper* left for Hongkong, and the *Frelon* for Saigon, the *Sarthe* was engaged in embarking the astronomers and their instruments, the *Pei-Ho*, with his excellency and suite, quitted the harbor a little before dark, and the shore, which a few hours previously was crowded with people, rapidly relapsed into its usual solitude.

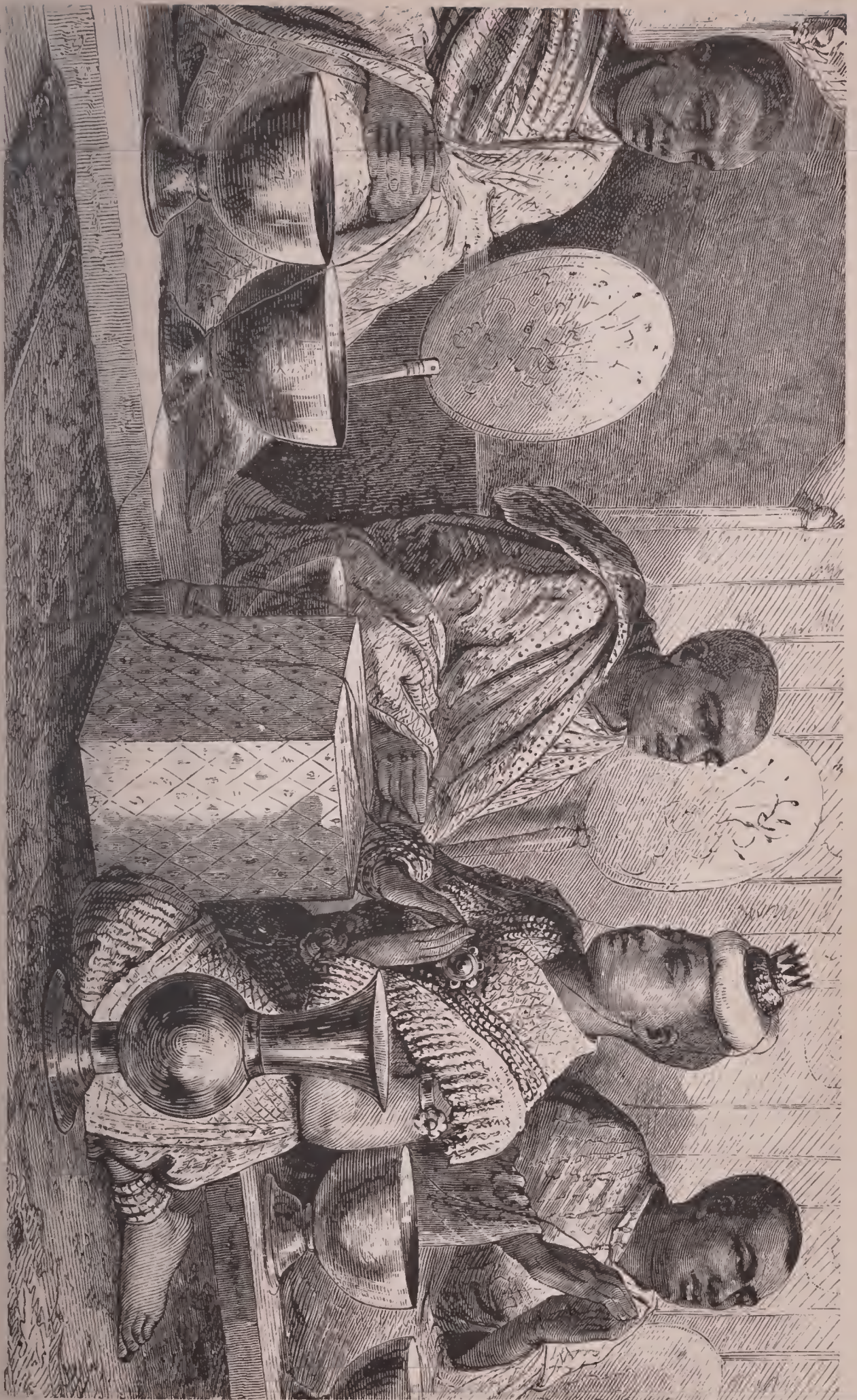
“ It would be improper to close this portion of the narrative without remarking how completely the king and his nobles broke through the trammels of Siamese etiquette for the purpose of doing honor to their guests. It was observed by those who had had experience of the people and their customs, that on no previous occasion had the court been so completely revolutionized ; the royal apartments were thrown open, and the ladies of the household brought prominently forward, whilst the younger members of the royal family were allowed to mix with their English visitors in the most friendly and sociable manner. The accounts of former missions and visits to Siam record complaints of the obstructions offered to intercourse with the court from the exclu-



siveness of its customs and ceremonies. Mr. Crawford, Rajah Brooke, and Sir J. Bowring have attested to this fact, and the latter relates that, to such an extent did this prevail, that objections were made to the members of his suite wearing their swords in the presence of the king. No such feelings exhibited themselves on this occasion, and in place of a slavish observance of court etiquette in its minutest details, the king and his nobles mixed freely with their guests as with equals, and seemed even anxious to conform to the customs of their visitors.

“The Siamese appear to be a gentle and amiable people, shrewd and lively, and fonder of amusement than work ; they are neither given to disputing, nor favorable to change ; and it is said of them that dishonesty is repugnant to their habits. They are short in stature, the women especially, who appear to be rarely more than five feet high ; the dress of the men is a loose jacket, with sleeves coming down to the hips and buttoning up to the throat, with a sarong or native wove cloth about three yards long and one yard wide, which is passed round the waist, and brought between the legs, so as to have much the effect of a pair of knee breeches or knickerbockers ; the legs and feet are bare, though men of rank usually wear shoes or slippers out of doors. The women are clothed very like the men, though sometimes the jacket is dispensed with in favor of a scarf, worn across the shoulder and affording very partial covering to the body. Both sexes shave the head, leaving a small tuft at the top, about the length and size of an ordinary clothes brush, the





REMOVAL OF THE TUFT OF A YOUNG SIAMESE.







effect of which is very singular. It is said that there is a difference between the way the hair is worn by men and by women, but it was not perceptible to us, except, perhaps, that the men are more particular in shaving. Young children wear their hair until they are ten or eleven years old, when it is shaved off with great ceremony, and in the case of princes, a great festival is held. His majesty showed Sir Harry Ord one of the princes, whose hair, he said, would be shaved next year, and invited his excellency to come to Bangkok and see the ceremony, which, he assured him, would be very grand."

It is probable that, had the king's life been prolonged, he would have ventured upon the visit to Singapore, which he seems to have contemplated, and which his son and successor has during the past year accomplished.

## CHAPTER X.

### AYUTHIA.

THE former capital of Siam, which in its day was a city of great magnificence and fame, has been for many years supplanted by Bangkok ; and probably a sight of the latter city as it now is, gives to the traveller the best impression of what the former used to be. So completely does the interest of the kingdom centre at Bangkok that few travellers go beyond the limits of the walls of that city except in ascending or descending the river which leads to it from the sea. For a description of Ayuthia in its glory we are obliged to turn back to the old German traveller who visited Siam during the first half of the seventeenth century. Sir John Bowring has connected this ancient narrative with that of a recent observer who has visited the ruins of the once famous city. We quote from Bowring's narrative :

“ According to the reports of travellers, there are numerous towns and villages to the north of Bangkok, along the sides of the Meinam ; the adjacent plains being principally dedicated to the cultivation of rice. In some of the inhabited localities, the different races, Siamese, Cochin-Chinese, Peguans,

Laos and Chinese are blended ; in others a separate race is located. Between the modern and the ancient capitals, Bangkok and Ayuthia, is a village called the 'Sunken Ship,' the houses being erected round a mast which towers above the surface at low water.

“ The ancient city of Ayuthia, whose pagodas and palaces were the object of so much laudation from ancient travellers, and which was called the Oriental Venice, from the abundance of its canals and the beauty of its public buildings, is now almost wholly in ruins, its towers and temples whelmed in the dust and covered with rank vegetation. The native name of Ayuthia was Sijan Thijan, meaning 'Terrestrial Paradise.' The Siamese are in the habit of giving very ostentatious names to their cities, which, as La Loubère says : 'do signify great things.' Pallegoix speaks of the ambitious titles given to Siamese towns, among which he mentions 'the City of Angels,' 'the City of Archangels,' and the 'Celestial Spectacle.'

“ The general outlines of the old city so closely resemble those of Bangkok, that the map of the one might easily be mistaken for the representation of the other.

“ It may not be out of place here to introduce the description of Ayuthia from the pen of Mandelsloe—one of those painstaking travellers whose contributions to geographical science have been collected in the ponderous folios of Dr. Harris (vol. i., p. 781).” Mandelsloe reports that

“ The city of Judda is built upon an island in the



river Meinam. It is the ordinary residence of the king of Siam, having several very fair streets, with spacious channels regularly cut. The suburbs are on both sides of the river, which, as well as the city itself, are adorned with many temples and palaces; of the first of which there are above three hundred within the city, distinguished by their gilt steeples, or rather pyramids, and afford a glorious prospect at a distance. The houses are, as all over the Indies, but indifferently built, and covered with tiles. The royal palace is equal to a large city. Ferdinando Mendez Pinto makes the number of inhabitants of this city amount, improbably, to four hundred thousand families. It is looked upon as impregnable, by reason of the overflowing of the river at six months' end. The king of Siam, who takes amongst his other titles that of Paecan Salsu, *i. e.*—Sacred Member of God,—has this to boast of, that, next to the Mougul, he can deduce his descent from more kings than any other in the Indies. He is absolute, his privy councillors, called mandarins, being chosen and deposed barely at his pleasure. When he appears in public, it is done with so much pomp and magnificence as is scarce to be imagined, which draws such a veneration to his person from the common people, that, even in the streets, as he passes by, they give him godlike titles and worship. He marries no more than one wife at a time, but has an infinite number of concubines. He feeds very high; but his drink is water only, the use of strong liquors being severely prohibited, by their ecclesiastical law, to persons of quality in Siam.

As the thirds of all the estates of the kingdom fall to his exchequer, so his riches must be very great ; but what makes them almost immense is, that he is the chief merchant in the kingdom, having his factors in all places of trade, to sell rice, copper; lead, saltpetre, etc. to foreigners. Méndez Pinto makes his yearly revenue rise to twelve millions of ducats, the greatest part of which being laid up in his treasury, must needs swell to an infinity in process of time." Sir John Bowring adds :

"Ayuthia was formerly one of the most distinguished cities of the East. The spires of the pagodas and pyramids, blackened by time, still tower above the magnificent trees which grow amidst the masses of ruins they overshadow. The ancient city was several leagues in circumference. Amidst the broken walls of palaces and temples are colossal statues from fifty to sixty feet high. These are mostly of brick, covered with brass of the thickness of two fingers. The annals of Siam report that, in founding one of these statues, 20,000 pounds of copper, 2,000 pounds of silver, and 400 pounds of gold were employed. The walls of the city are overturned—thick and impenetrable masses of weeds, brushwood, and tall trees, tenanted by bats and vultures, cover the vast desolation. In the midst of the heaps of rubbish treasures are often discovered. The new city of Ayuthia surrounds the ancient site. It has two lines of floating bazaars. Its population is about 40,000. At a league's distance from the city, on the northern side, is a majestic edifice called the 'Golden Moun-

tain,' built A. D. 1387. It is a pyramid four hundred feet high, each side having a staircase by which large galleries surrounding the building are mounted. From the third stage there is a splendid prospect; and there are four corridors by which the dome is entered, in whose centre is a gilded image of Buddha, rendered fetid by the depositions of millions of bats, which day and night are flitting in dire confusion around the altar. The dome is elevated one hundred and fifty feet above the galleries, and terminates in a gilded spire.

“I have received the following account of the present condition of Ayuthia, the old capital of Siam, from a gentleman who visited it in December, 1855 :

“ ‘Ayuthia is at this time the second city of the kingdom. Situated, as the greater part is, on a creek or canal, connecting the main river with a large branch which serves as the high road to Pakpriaui, Korat, and southern Laos, travellers are apt entirely to overlook it when visiting the ruins of the various wats or temples on the island where stood the ancient city.

“ ‘The present number of inhabitants cannot be less than between twenty and thirty thousand, among which are a large number of Chinese, a few Birmese, and some natives of Laos. They are principally employed in shopkeeping, agriculture, or fishing, for there are no manufactories of importance. Floating houses are most commonly employed as dwellings, the reason for which is that



the Siamese very justly consider them more healthy than houses on land.

“ ‘The soil is wonderfully fertile. The principal product is rice, which, although of excellent quality, is not so well adapted for the market as that grown nearer the sea, on account of its being much lighter and smaller. A large quantity of oil, also an astringent liquor called toddy, and sugar, is manufactured from the palm, (*Elaeis*,) extensive groves of which are to be found in the vicinity of the city. I was shown some European turnips which had sprung up, and attained a very large size. Indigenous fruits and vegetables also flourish in great plenty. The character of the vegetation is, however, different from that around Bangkok. The cocoa and areca palms become rare, and give place to the bamboo.

“ ‘The city is naturally considered one of the most important in the country, but is protected by no fortifications. It has a governor and deputy-governor, and some inferior officers appointed over it.

“ ‘The king pays commonly one visit during the year to the capital of his ancestors, which lasts a week or two. He has a palace erected on the river side, on the site of the old palace, which, however, has little of the appearance of a royal residence, the greater part of the building being constructed of teak and bamboo.

“ ‘Most of the principal merchants of Bangkok have houses in the town, which are used either as

shops or as residences, wherein to pass a week or two of recreation in the hot season.

“ ‘ The only visible remains of the old city are a large number of wats, in different stages of decay. They extend over an area of several miles of country, and lie hidden in the trees and jungle, which have sprung up around them. As the beauty of a Siamese temple consists not in its architecture, but in the quantity of arabesque work with which the brick and stucco walls are covered, it soon yields to the power of time and weather, and becomes, if neglected, an unsightly heap of bricks and wood-work, overgrown with parasitical plants. It is thus at Ayuthia. A vast pile of bricks and earth, with here and there a spire still rearing itself to the skies, marks the spot where once stood a shrine before which thousands were wont to prostrate themselves in superstitious adoration. There stand also the formerly revered images of Guadama, once resplendent with gold and jewels, but now broken, mutilated, and without a shadow of their previous splendor. There is one sacred spire of immense height and size, which is still kept in some kind of repair, and which is sometimes visited by the king. It is situated about four miles from the town, in the centre of a plain of paddy-fields. Boats and elephants are the only means of reaching it, as there is no road whatever, except such as the creeks and swampy paddy-fields afford. It bears much celebrity among the Siamese, on account of its height, but can boast of nothing attractive to foreigners but the fine view which is obtained from the sum-

mit. This spire, like all others, is but a succession of steps from the bottom to the top ; a few ill-made images affording the only relief from the monotony of the brickwork. It bears, too, none of those ornaments, constructed of broken crockery, with which the spires and temples of Bangkok are so plentifully bedecked.

“ ‘ This is all that repays the traveller for his visit, —a poor remuneration though, were it the curiosity of an antiquarian that led him to the place ; for the ruins have not yet attained a sufficient age to compensate for their uninteresting appearance.

“ ‘ As we were furnished with a letter from the Phya Kalahom to the governor, instructing him to furnish us with everything requisite for our convenience, we waited on that official, but were unfortunate enough to find that he had gone to Bangkok. The letter was thus rendered useless ; for no one dared open it in his absence. Happily, however, we were referred to a nobleman who had been sent from Bangkok to superintend the catching of elephants, and he, without demur, gave us every assistance in his power.

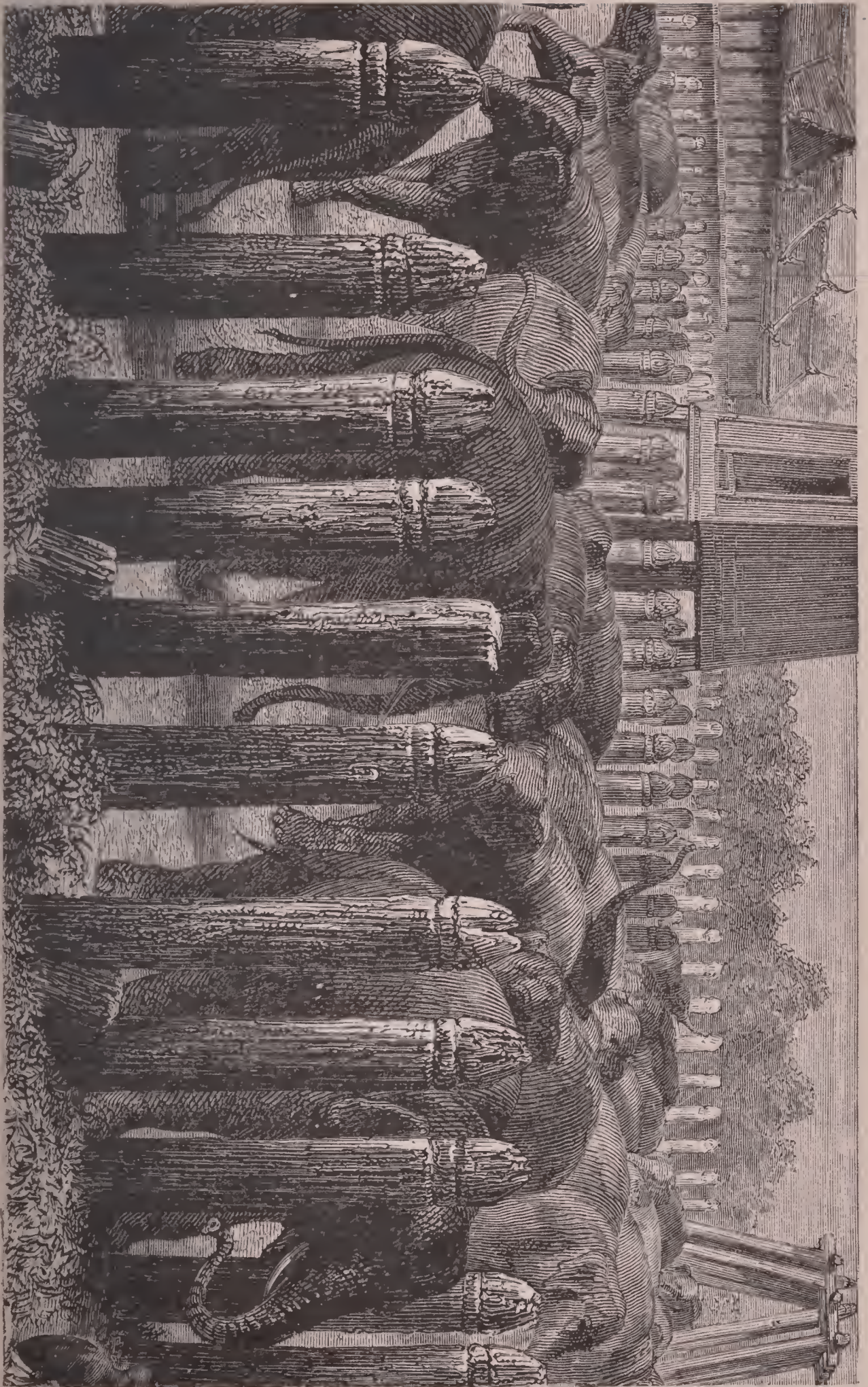
“ ‘ After visiting the ruins, therefore, we inspected the kraal or stockade, in which the elephants are captured. This was a large quadrangular piece of ground, enclosed by a wall about six feet in thickness, having an entrance on one side, through which the elephants are made to enter the enclosure. Inside the wall is a fence of strong teak stakes driven into the ground a few inches apart. In the centre is a small house erected on poles, and strongly sur-



rounded with stakes, wherein some men are stationed for the purpose of securing the animals. These abound in the neighborhood of the city, but cannot exactly be called wild, as the majority of them have, at some time or other, been subjected to servitude. They are all the property of the king, and it is criminal to hurt or kill one of them. Once a year, a large number is collected together in the enclosure, and as many as are wanted of those possessing the points which the Siamese consider beautiful are captured. The fine points in an elephant are: a color approaching to white or red, black nails on the toes, (the common color of these nails is black and white,) and intact tails (for, owing to their pugnacious disposition, it is rarely that an elephant is caught which has not had its tail bitten off). On this occasion, the kings and a large concourse of nobles assemble together to witness the proceedings; they occupy a large platform on one side of the enclosure. The wild elephants are then driven in by the aid of tame males of a very large size and great strength, and the selection takes place. If an animal which is wanted escapes from the kraal, chase is immediately made after it by a tame elephant, the driver of which throws a lasso to catch the feet of the fugitive. Having effected this, the animal on which he rides leans itself with all its power the opposite way, and thus brings the other violently to the ground. It is then strongly bound, and conducted to the stables.

“‘ Naturally enough, accidents are of common occurrence, men being frequently killed by the





OF ENGLAND IN AN EAST INDIES PAPER AND AVIATION







infuriated animals, which are sometimes confined two or three days in the enclosure without food.

“ ‘When elephants are to be sent to Bangkok, a floating house has to be constructed for the purpose.

“ ‘As elephants were placed at our disposal, we enjoyed the opportunity of judging of their capabilities, in a long ride through places inaccessible to a lesser quadruped. Their step is slow and cautious, and the rider is subjected to a measured roll from side to side, which at first is somewhat disagreeable. In traversing marshes and soft ground, they feel their way with their trunks. They are excessively timid; horses are a great terror to them, and, unless they are well trained, the report of a fowling-piece scares them terribly.’

“ Above Ayuthia the navigation of the Meinam is often interrupted by sand-banks, but the borders are still occupied by numerous and populous villages; their number diminishes until the marks of human presence gradually disappear—the river is crowded with crocodiles, the trees are filled with monkeys, and the noise of the elephants is heard in the impervious woods. After many days’ passage up the river, one of the oldest capitals of Siam, built fifteen hundred years ago, is approached. Its present name is Phit Salok, and it contains about five thousand inhabitants, whose principal occupation is cutting teak-wood, to be floated down the stream to Bangkok.

“ The account which Bishop Pallegoix gives of the interior of the country above Ayuthia is not

very flattering. He visited it in the rainy season, and says it appeared little better than a desert—a few huts by the side of the stream—neither towns, nor soldiers, nor custom-houses. Rice was found cheap and abundant, everything else wanting. Some of the bishop's adventures are characteristic. In one place, where he heard pleasant music, he found a mandarin surrounded by his dozen wives, who were playing a family concert. The mandarin took the opportunity to seek information about Christianity, and listened patiently and pleased enough, until the missionary told him one wife must satisfy him if he embraced the Catholic faith, which closed the controversy, as the Siamese said *that* was an impossible condition. In some places, the many-colored pagodas towered above the trees, and they generally possessed a gilded Buddha twenty feet in height. The bishop observes that the influence of the Buddhist priests is everywhere paramount among the Siamese, but that they have little hold upon the Chinese, Malays, or Laos people. In one of the villages they offered a wife to one of the missionaries; but finding the present unacceptable, they replaced the lady by two youths, who continued in his service, and he speaks well of their fidelity."

"Somewhere between Bangkok and Ayuthia," (as a missionary records,) "we stopped a little to examine a paper manufactory. The paper is made here from the bark of a tree or plant called khri. It is reduced to a pulp by manual beating, soaked in water, and then run into a mould, which consists

of a rectangular box, about fourteen by twenty inches, with a piece of coarse cloth stretched over the bottom for a strainer; and then, instead of pressing, it is exposed to dry in the sun before it is removed from the mould. When dried it is ready for use, but cannot be written upon with ink, as it spreads; and the texture is coarse, resembling wrapping-paper. The Siamese use a kind of soft stone, or steatite pencil, for writing." The paper has not the extraordinary strength and toughness of the Japanese paper, but is soft and pliant. It is used for writing-paper, not for books. "The books of the Siamese," says Bowring, "open in one continuous sheet, folded fan-like; the usual length of the page from eight to twelve inches, the breadth three or four; the paper is blank, and the characters are written generally with gamboge, though sometimes with white paint. All hasty records are made with chalk, which is easily removed when the record is not intended to be permanent. Indian, (*i. e.* China) ink, is also used for writing on light-colored paper. The leaves of a sort of palm-tree (*koi*) are employed as tablets, which are written on by a *stile*, but principally for the reproduction of the sacred books. These are fastened loosely together by strings, so that they can be easily turned over. They are preserved under richly painted and gilded coverings, and are highly appreciated. Pallegoix says that there are a number of ladies in the palace specially occupied in writing the books."

Stray leaves of these sacred writings may be



picked up, sometimes, about the wats or temples. The characters formed by the *stile* used in writing remind one of the characters formed in our books for the blind, or of those produced on paper by the ordinary telegraphic instrument.

## CHAPTER XI.

### MOUHOT'S TRAVELS.—THE COUNTRY BEYOND AND ABOUT AYUTHIA.

**M.** MOUHOT, whose explorations of the interior of Siam have been more extensive than those of any other writer, was prevented by his untimely death from giving to the world the completed results of his industrious and intelligent investigations. His narrative, prepared for the press by his brother, is most full in regard to the regions most remote and inaccessible, and will be more largely quoted from in regard to Cambodia and Laos than in regard to Siam. Mouhot was a Frenchman by birth, but by his marriage with an Englishwoman became allied to the family of Mungo Park, the famous African explorer. He was a faithful student of natural science, devoting himself especially to ornithology and conchology. While still a very young man he had travelled extensively in Russia. He was a good Greek scholar, and it was not difficult for him to acquire with facility both Russian and Polish, during his stay in that vast northern empire, which he traversed from St. Peters-

burg to Sebastopol, and from Warsaw to Moscow.

He was a good draughtsman, and a practical photographer of very large and varied experience; but more than all, he was possessed by an adventurous and enthusiastic spirit, which welcomed danger when it came in the pursuit of scientific discovery. He was especially fitted for the life of an explorer by his physical constitution. He was active, and with bodily strength beyond the average; "a result," says his biographer, "of the gymnastic sports in which he had taken pleasure in his youth, and of his habitual sobriety. He had never had an attack of fever, nor any other illness; and he resisted for four years the effects of a tropical climate, incredible fatigue, bad food, and nights passed in forests, without any apparent loss of health or strength, which is doubtless to be attributed to his never taking spirits, and wine only very sparingly."

M. Mouhot was a Protestant. But he was a man of such amiable and honest character, and of such broad sympathies, that he won for himself the cordial affection of both Protestant and Catholic missionaries in the regions through which he travelled, and was under many obligations to both for hospitable and friendly services rendered. He was evidently a man of devout and religious heart, and almost the last words of his journal, written while he was dying in the jungles of Laos, breathe a spirit of Christian faith and reliance on the love of God. He was greatly lamented by the scientific world, as



well as by those who were bound to him by ties of kinship, or of personal acquaintance.

Mouhot embarked at London, on the 27th of April, 1858, "in a sailing ship of very modest pretensions, in order to put in execution," as he says, "my long-cherished project of exploring the kingdoms of Siam, Cambodia, and Laos, and visiting the tribes who occupy the banks of the great river Mekon.

"I spare the reader the details of the voyage and of my life on board ship, and shall merely state that there were annoyances in plenty, both as regards the accommodation for the passengers, and the conduct of the captain, whose sobriety was more than doubtful. We arrived at Singapore on the 3rd September. I made only a short stay there, my chief object being to gain information respecting the country I was about to visit. On the 12th of the same month, after a very monotonous voyage, we arrived at the mouth of the river Meinam, on whose banks Bangkok is built. Our vessel, only drawing eight feet of water, passed the bar without much difficulty, and anchored at Paknam, in front of the governor's house, whither the captain and myself proceeded without loss of time, in order to obtain the necessary permission to continue our route.

"This formality over, I hastened to visit the forts, which are of brick and battlemented, the markets, and some of the streets. Paknam is the Sebastopol or Cronstadt of the kings of Siam ; nevertheless, I fancied that a European squadron could easily master it, and that the commander who

breakfasting there, might dine the same day at Bangkok.

“ On a little island in the middle of the river rises a famous and rather remarkable pagoda, containing, I was told, the bodies of their last kings. The effect of this pyramidal structure reflected in the deep and limpid water, with its background of tropical verdure, was most striking. As for the town, all that I saw of it was disgustingly dirty.

“ The Meinam deserves its beautiful name—Mother of Waters—for its depth permits the largest vessels to coast along its banks without danger : so closely, indeed, that the birds may be heard singing gaily in the overhanging branches, and the hum of numberless insects enlivens the deck by night and day. The whole effect is picturesque and beautiful. Here and there houses are dotted about on either bank, and numerous villages give variety to the distant landscape.

“ We met a great number of canoes managed with incredible dexterity by men and women, and often even by children, who are here early familiarized with the water. I saw the governor's children, almost infants, throw themselves into the river, and swim and dive like waterfowl. It was a curious and interesting sight, particularly from the strong contrast between the little ones and the adults. Here, as in the whole plain of Siam, which I afterwards visited, I met most attractive children, tempting one to stop and caress them ; but as they grow older they rapidly lose all beauty, the habit of





PANNEMAKER

VIEW OF PAKNAM ON THE MEKONG.





chewing the betel-nut producing an unsightly blackening of the teeth and swelling of the lips.

“ It is impossible to state the exact population of Bangkok, the census of all eastern countries being extremely imperfect. It is estimated, however, at from three to four hundred thousand inhabitants. Owing to its semi-aquatic site, we had reached the centre of the city while I believed myself still in the country ; I was only undeceived by the sight of various European buildings, and the steamers which plough this majestic river, whose margins are studded with floating houses and shops.

“ Bangkok is the Venice of the east, and whether bent on business or pleasure, you must go by water. In place of the noise of carriages and horses, nothing is heard but the dip of oars, the songs of sailors, or the cries of the Cipayes, (Siamese rowers.) The river is the high street and the boulevard, while the canals are the cross streets, along which you glide, lying luxuriously at the bottom of your canoe.

“ We cast anchor in front of the cathedral of the French mission and of the modest palace of Monseigneur Pallegoix, the worthy archbishop, who, for nearly thirty years, without any assistance but that of missionaries as devoted as himself, has made the revered emblem of Christianity and the name of France respected in these distant regions.

“ The sight of the cross in foreign lands speaks to the heart like meeting with an old friend ; one feels comforted and no longer alone. It is beauti-

ful to see the devotion, self-denial, and courage of these poor and pious missionaries ; a blessing as they are, also, to travellers, it would be ungrateful not to render them the gratitude which is their just due.

“ For some time past, particularly since the wars in China and Cochin-Chína, Siam has been much talked of in Europe ; and, relying on the faith of treaties of peace and commerce, several French and English houses of business have been established there. Unfortunately, there was much deception on the part of the native authorities, which has given rise to the general and well-founded complaints from the merchants. The fact is, that they have dangerous competitors in the mandarins and even in the princes, who monopolize the greater part of the trade in rice and sugar, their chief articles of commerce, which they despatch in their junks and other vessels. Moreover, the people were not prepared for the change which had taken place in the laws, and had scarcely cultivated more than enough for home consumption ; add to this that the population is far from numerous, and, the Siamese being an indolent race, most of the agriculture falls into the hands of the Chinese, who flock to Singapore, Australia, and California.

“ The country certainly merits the reputation which it enjoys for beauty, but it is especially in its mountain scenery that nature displays its grandeur.

“ During a ten years' residence in Russia I witnessed the frightful effects of despotism and slave-



ry. At Siam, results not less sad and deplorable obtruded themselves on my notice ; every inferior crouches before a higher in rank ; he receives his orders kneeling, or with some other sign of abject submission and respect. The whole of society is in a state of prostration.

“ I was making my preparations for departure on the 16th October, my purpose being to penetrate into the north of the country and visit Cambodia and the savage tribes belonging to it, when I received an invitation from the king of Siam to be present at the great dinner which this monarch gives every year, on his birthday, to the European residents in Bangkok. I was presented by Monseigneur Pallegoix, and his majesty's reception was kind and courteous. His costume consisted of a pair of large trousers, a short brown jacket of some thin material, and slippers ; on his head he wore a little copper helmet like those worn by the naval officers, and at his side a rich sabre.

“ Most of the Europeans in Bangkok were present at the dinner, and enthusiastic toasts were drunk to the health of his majesty, who, instead of being seated, stood or walked round the table, chewing betel, and addressing some pleasant observation to each of his guests in turn. The repast was served in a vast hall, from whence we could see a platoon of the royal guard, with flags and drums, drawn up in the courtyard. When I went to take leave of the king, he graciously presented me with a little bag of green silk, containing some of the gold and silver coin of the country, a cour-

tesy which was most unexpected, and for which I expressed my gratitude.

“ After my visits of ceremony to the two kings, I hastened to finish the preparations for my voyage. I bought a light boat capable of holding all my chests, reserving a narrow space for myself, and another for the bipeds and quadrupeds forming my adopted family—viz., two rowers, one of whom also officiated as cook, a parroquet, an ape, and a dog. One of the boatmen was a Cambodian, and the other an Annamite, both Christians, and knowing a few words of Latin (which is much esteemed among the native Christians, thanks to the ritual of the Catholic mission,) and English, so that, as I had already picked up a little Siamese, I could make myself pretty well understood.

“ On the 19th October I quitted Bangkok, and commenced my voyage up the Meinam. The current runs very strongly at this season, and it took us five days to go about seventy miles. At night we suffered terribly from the mosquitoes, and even during the day had to keep up an incessant fanning to drive off these pestilent little vampires. They were so numerous that you could catch them by handfuls, and their humming resembled that of a hive of bees. These insects are the curse of all tropical countries, but here they peculiarly abound in the marshes and lands covered with slime and mud left by the retiring waters, where the heat of the sun and the moisture combined, favor their rapid increase. My legs suffered especially from their attacks.

“ As the country was entirely inundated, we could not land anywhere, and even after killing a bird I frequently could not get at it. All this was very tantalizing, for the banks of the stream are very gay and attractive, nature wearing here her richest dress.

“ At this time of the year the rains have entirely ceased, and do not return for several months. For some days the northeastern monsoon had been blowing, the weather was constantly fine, and the heat tempered by the wind. The waters, also, were beginning to subside. It was the period of the religious *fêtes* of the Siamese, and the river was almost incessantly crowded with long and handsome boats bearing flags, many of them manned by more than fifty rowers, all in new and bright-colored dresses, trying to pass each other, and exciting themselves by piercing cries and all sorts of noises. In some cases, however, sweet and agreeable music formed an accompaniment more grateful to the ear. One boat, belonging to a mandarin, was escorted by a number of others ; it was remarkable for its elaborate carving and the magnificence of its gilding, and was carrying yellow stuffs and other presents to the neighboring pagodas.

“ The king rarely shows himself in public more than twice a year, once during the month of October, and a second time on board his barge, when a procession is formed, consisting of three or four hundred boats, often containing more than 1,200 persons. The effect produced by this aquatic pageant, with the rowers in their brilliant dresses, and



the multitude of rich flags, is extremely gorgeous, and such as is only to be witnessed in the East.

“I was surprised to see the gaiety and light-heartedness of the people, in spite of the yoke which weighs on them, and the exorbitant taxes they have to pay; but the softness of the climate, the native gentleness of the race, and the long duration of their servitude, from generation to generation, have made them oblivious of the bitterness and hardships inseparable from despotism.

“Everywhere they were making preparations for their fishing season, for when the waters subside from the fields, the fish are most plentiful. Dried in the sun, they furnish food for the whole year, and are also exported in large quantities. My boat was so encumbered with chests, boxes, and instruments, that the space left for me was very confined, and I suffered from heat and want of air; but these were trifles compared with the mosquitoes.

“On arriving at Ayuthia, my rowers conducted me direct to the excellent Father Larmandy, a French missionary, by whom I was expected. The good priest received me with great kindness, and placed at my disposal all he had to offer in his little house. He employs his leisure time in the study of natural history and in hunting, and frequently accompanied me in my rambles. As we explored the woods we talked of our own charming country—France.

“After a long hunting or rowing expedition, we always, on our return home, found our repast prepared by my servant Niou, who excelled in Siamese

cookery, and which our fatigue made us doubly appreciate. Rice and omelette, or curried fish, bamboo-stalks, haricots, and other wild vegetables, formed our diet, with the addition of roast fowls and game when the chase had been fortunate. Three chickens cost a 'fuand' (37 centimes).

"The heat was sometimes overwhelming; for a week we had 90 degrees of Fahrenheit in the shade throughout the twenty-four hours, but the mosquitoes were fewer in number, which was a great relief. In our excursions we visited some ruins amid the woods, and I made a collection of beautiful butterflies, and found several insects new to me. When I reach Pakpriau, which is a few days' journey to the north, on the frontier of the lake, I shall find a mountain country, where I am sure of a plentiful harvest of insects and land shells.

"The comet, which I had already observed on my journey, shone here with increased brilliancy, and it was difficult not to believe that the extreme heat was owing to the influence of this meteor.

"I drank nothing but tea, hoping by abstinence from cold water, and from all wine and spirits, to escape fever. So far, my health had certainly never been better, not even in the north of Russia. Since the ports have been opened to English and other European vessels, everything has been doubled in price, but still remained cheap as compared with Europe, and I did not spend more than a franc a day for my own living and that of my men. The people flocked to see my collections, and could not imagine what I should do

with so many animals and insects. I have before mentioned the skillful management of boats, and the fearlessness in swimming and diving, displayed by very young children. I used to amuse myself by offering some of them my cigar-ends to smoke, in return for which they would run after butterflies, and bring them to me uninjured.

Sir John Bowring quotes the following account, as given by Mr. Abeel, of a child whose aquatic virtues naturally excited much attention in Siam :

“ Mr. Hunter sent for us to witness a sight which, in more enlightened countries than Siam, would be considered equally strange. It was a young child sporting in the water as in its native element, with all the buoyancy and playfulness of a fish. Its evolutions are astonishing, sometimes rolling over with a rapid motion and apparently no exertion, then turning round like a hoop, by bending its face under as it lies on its back, and throwing its feet over its head. It floats like a cork, with no apparent motion of any of the muscles ; occasionally allows itself to sink till only half of the head is seen, dives, holds its face under water enough to alarm those who are ignorant of its powers, and yet appears to breathe as easily as though it had suffered no suspension of respiration. From its actions and countenance it is evidently delighted with the exercise, evinces no fatigue, nor the least apprehension, and often cries when taken up. It is a singular object, both in and out of the water. It is three years old, very small, can neither speak nor walk, is very defect-



ive in sight, will take nothing but its earliest provision,—in fact, appears quite idiotic, and has exhibited the same fondness for the water, and peculiar feats in it, from the first year of its age, the first time it was tried.”

This infant phenomenon will do to go along with the Siamese twins, who, by the way, are the children of a Chinese father, and will serve to illustrate what Mouhot says about the naturalness with which the little children in Siam take to the water. We resume Mouhot's narrative :

“I discovered here a sort of spider, which is also, I believe, found at the Cape, from which a silken thread may be drawn out by taking hold of the end hanging from its body. One has but to go on winding ; the thread is very strong, and never breaks.

“It requires some time to become accustomed to the shrill chirpings during the night of myriads of grasshoppers and other insects, which seem never to sleep. There appears to be no such thing as silence or repose ; everywhere is a continual stir, the gushing overflow of life in this exuberant region.

“What a contrast between the subdued tints and cold skies of Europe, and this burning clime and glittering firmament ! How pleasant it was to rise in the early morning before the glowing sun had begun his course ; and sweeter still in the evening to listen to the thousand sounds, the sharp and metallic cries, which seemed as though an army of goldsmiths were at work !

“ The people here might be extremely happy, were they not kept in such abject slavery ; bountiful nature, that second mother, treats them as her spoilt children, and does all for them. The forests abound with vegetables and exquisite fruits ; the rivers, the lakes, and the ponds teem with fish ; a few bamboos suffice to construct a house, while the periodical inundations render the lands wonderfully fertile. Man has but to sow and to plant ; the sun saves him all further trouble ; and he neither knows nor feels the want of all those articles of luxury which form part of the very existence of a European.

“ On the 13th November we arrived at a village called Arajik, where the land was more elevated. Here I killed several white squirrels, animals which I had not met with in the neighborhood of Bangkok. It is only in the solitude and depth of the woods that one can fully admire and enter into the sort of harmony and concord which reigns in the songs of the various birds, forming such a pleasing kind of symphony that the voice of one is rarely overpowered by that of another ; one can enjoy at once the general effect and the melodious note of the particular winged musician we prefer. Scarcely does the sun begin to gild the tops of the trees, when, alert and gay, they commence their morning hymn. The martins, the warblers, the drongos, and the dominicans, respond to the turtle-doves' cooing in the highest branches. Music of a less dulcet nature is discoursed by the aquatic and rapacious tribes, such as cranes, herons, and king-

fishers, who from time to time utter their piercing cries.

“ I procured a guide in the mandarin of the village, who received me courteously, and offered me, in return for some trifling presents, a breakfast of rice, fish and bananas. I requested his aid in arranging my purposed visit to Mount Phrabat, a favorite object of pilgrimage among the Siamese, who resort thither yearly in great numbers to adore the sacred footprint of Buddha. He volunteered to accompany me, an offer which I gratefully accepted.”



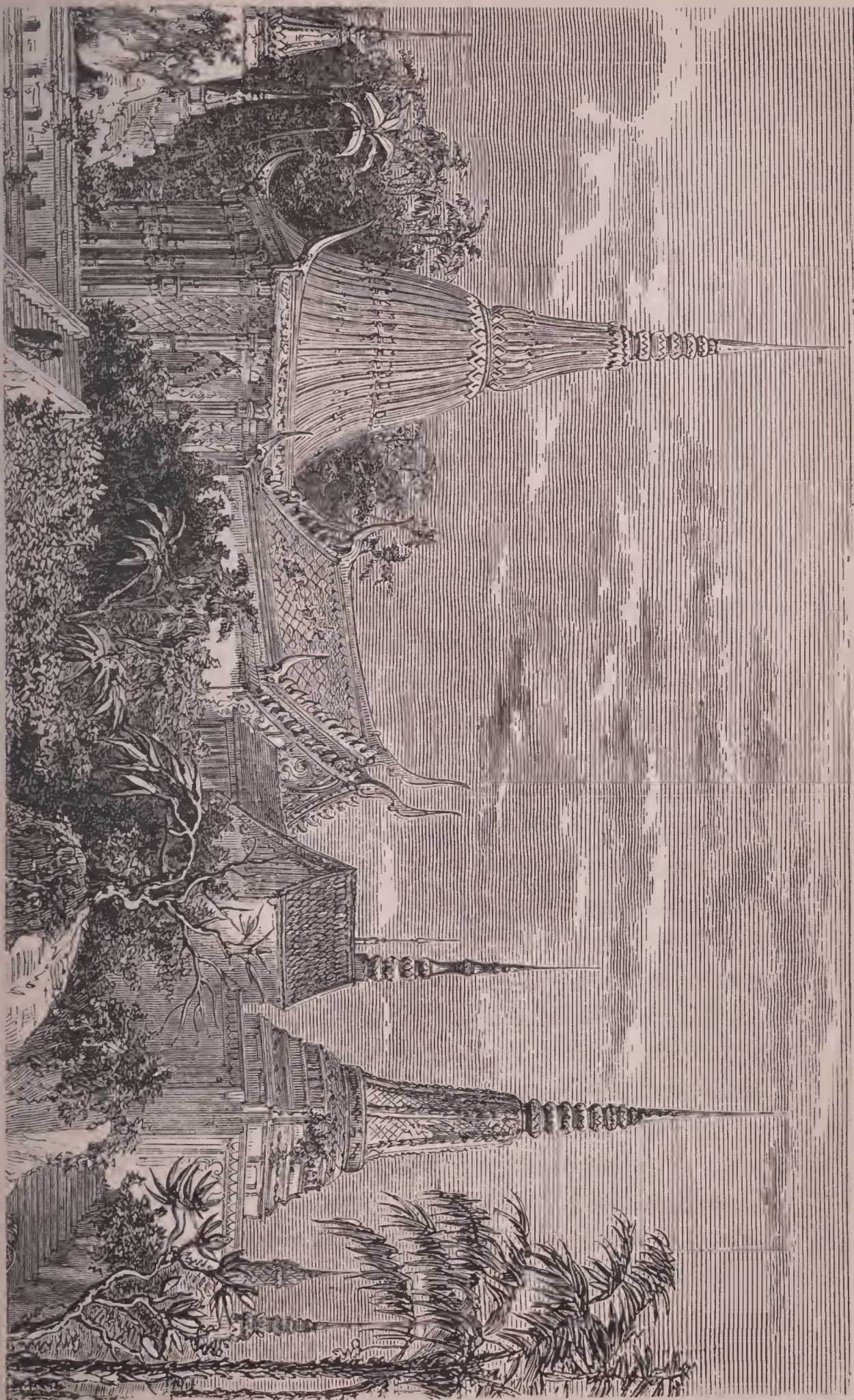
## CHAPTER XII.

### MOUHOT'S VISIT TO PHRABAT AND PATAWI.

ONE of the most famous of the holy places of Siam, and one which it is now comparatively easy to visit, is the shrine of "the footstep of Buddha." This footstep was discovered early in the seventeenth century by the king who is called the founder of the second dynasty. As he had been, before his accession to the throne, a member of the priesthood, and "very popular as a learned and religious teacher," it is easy to see what aptitude he had for such a discovery. It is a favorite resort for pilgrims.

"Bishop Pallegoix," says Bowring, "speaks of a large assemblage of gaily-ornamented barges, filled with multitudes of people in holiday dresses, whom he met above Ayuthia, going on a pilgrimage to the 'foot of Buddha.' The women and girls wore scarfs of silk and bracelets of gold and silver, and filled the air with their songs, to which troops of priests and young men responded in noisy music. The place of debarkation is Tha Rua, which is on the road to Phrabat, where the footprint of the god is found. More than five hundred barges





PAGODA AT MOUNT PHRABAT.







were there, all illuminated : a drama was performed on the shore ; there was a great display of vocal and instrumental music, tea-drinking, playing at cards and dice, and the merry festivities lasted through the whole night.

“ Early the following day, the cortege departed by the river. It consisted of princes, nobles, rich men, ladies, girls, priests, all handsomely clad. They landed, and many proceeded on foot, while the more distinguished mounted on elephants to move towards the sacred mountain. In such localities the spirit of fanaticism is usually intemperate and persecuting ; and the bishop says, the governor received him angrily, and accused him of ‘ intending to debauch his people by making them Christians.’ But he was softened by presents and explanations, and ultimately gave the bishop a passport, recommending him to ‘ all the authorities and chiefs of villages under his command, as a Christian priest, (farang,) and as his friend, and ordering that he should be kindly treated, protected and furnished with all the provisions he might require.’

“ Of his visit to the sacred mountain, so much the resort of Buddhist pilgrims, Pallegoix gives this account :

“ ‘ I engaged a guide, mounted an elephant, and took the route of Phrabat, followed by my people. I was surprised to find a wide and excellent road, paved with bricks, and opened in a straight line across the forests. On both sides of the road, at a league’s distance, were halls or stations, with wells

dug for the use of the pilgrims. Soon the road became crooked, and we stopped to bathe in a large pond. At four o'clock, we reached the magnificent monastery of Phrabat, built on the declivity, but nearly at the foot of a tall mountain, formed by fantastic rocks of a bluish color. The monastery has several walls surrounding it; and having entered the second enclosure, we found the *abbé-prince*, seated on a raised floor, and directing the labors of a body of workmen. His attendants called on us to prostrate ourselves, but we did not obey them. "Silence!" he said; "you know not that the *farang* honor their grandees by standing erect." I approached, and presented him with a bottle of salvolatile, which he smelt with delight. I requested he would appoint some one to conduct us to see the vestige of Buddha; and he called his principal assistant, (the *balat*,) and directed him to accompany us. The *balat* took us round a great court surrounded with handsome edifices; showed us two large temples; and we reached a broad marble staircase with balustrades of gilded copper, and made the round of the terrace which is the base of the monument. All the exterior of this splendid edifice is gilt; its pavement is square, but it takes the form of a dome, and is terminated in a pyramid a hundred and twenty feet high. The gates and windows, which are double, are exquisitely wrought. The outer gates are inlaid with handsome devices in mother-of-pearl, and the inner gates are adorned with gilt pictures representing the events in the history of Buddha.

“ ‘The interior is yet more brilliant ; the pavement is covered with silver mats. At the end, on a throne ornamented with precious stones, is a statue of Buddha in massive silver, of the height of a man ; in the middle is a silver grating, which surrounds the vestige, whose length is about eighteen inches. It is not distinctly visible, being covered with rings, ear ornaments, bracelets, and gold necklaces, the offerings of devotees when they come to worship. The history of the relic is this : In the year 1602, notice was sent to the king, at Ayuthia, that a discovery had been made at the foot of a mountain, of what appeared to be a foot-mark of Buddha. The king sent his learned men, and the most intelligent priests, to report if the lineaments of the imprint resembled the description of the foot of Buddha, as given in the sacred Pali writings. The examination having taken place, and the report being in the affirmative, the king caused the monastery of Phrabat to be built, which has been enlarged and enriched by his successors.

“ ‘After visiting the monument, the *balat* escorted us to a deep well, cut out of the solid stone ; the water is good, and sufficient to provide for crowds of pilgrims. The abbé-prince is the sovereign lord of the mountain and its environs within a circuit of eight leagues ; he has from four to five thousand men under his orders, to be employed as he directs in the service of the monastery. On the day of my visit, a magnificent palanquin, such as is used by great princes, was brought to him as a present



from the king. He had the civility to entertain us as well as he could. I remarked that the kitchen was under the care of a score of young girls, and they gave the name of pages to the youths who attended us. In no other monastery is this usage to be found.

“ ‘ His highness caused us to be lodged in a handsome wooden house, and gave me two guards of honor to serve and watch over me, forbidding my going out at night on account of tigers. The following morning I took leave of the good abbé-prince, mounted my elephant, and taking another road, we skirted the foot of the mountain till we reached a spring of spouting waters. We found there a curious plant, whose leaves were altogether like the shape and the colors of butterflies. We took a simple breakfast in the first house we met with ; and at four o'clock in the afternoon we reached our boat, and after a comfortable night's rest we left Tha Rua to return to our church at Ayuthia.’ ”

M. Mouhot thus describes his journey from Ayuthia :

“ At seven o'clock in the morning my host was waiting for me at the door, with elephants mounted by their drivers, and other attendants necessary for our expedition. At the same hour in the evening we reached our destination, and before many minutes had elapsed, all the inhabitants were informed of our arrival ; priests and mountaineers were all full of curiosity to look at the stranger. Among the principal people of the place I dis-

tributed some little presents, with which they were delighted; but my fire-arms and other weapons were especially the subjects of admiration. I paid a visit to the prince of the mountain, who was detained at home by illness. He ordered breakfast for me; and expressing his regret at not being able to accompany me, sent four men to serve as guides and assistants. As a return for his kindness and urbanity, I presented him with a small pistol, which he received with extreme gratification.

“ We proceeded afterwards to the western side of the mountain, where is the famous temple containing the footprint of Samona-Kodom, the Buddha of Indo-China. I was filled with astonishment and admiration on arriving at this point, and feel utterly incapable of describing the spectacle which met my view. What convulsion of Nature—what force could have upheaved those immense rocks, piled one upon another in such fantastic forms? Beholding such a chaos, I could well understand how the imagination of this simple people, who are ignorant of the true God, should have here discovered signs of the marvellous, and traces of their false divinities. It was as if a second and recent deluge had just abated; this sight alone was enough to recompense me for all my fatigues.

“ On the mountain summit, in the crevices of the rocks, in the valleys, in the caverns, all around, could be seen the footprints of animals, those of elephants and tigers being most strongly marked; but I am convinced that many of them were

formed by antediluvian and unknown animals. All these creatures, according to the Siamese, formed the *cortège* of Buddha in his passage over the mountain.

“As for the temple itself, there is nothing remarkable about it; it is like most of the pagodas in Siam—on the one hand unfinished, and on the other in a state of dilapidation; and it is built of brick, although both stone and marble abound at Phrabat. The approach to it is by a flight of large steps, and the walls are covered with little pieces of colored glass, forming arabesques in great variety, which glitter in the sun with striking effect. The panels and cornices are gilt; but what chiefly attracts attention by the exquisite workmanship are the massive ebony doors, inlaid with mother-of-pearl of different colors, and arranged in beautiful designs. The interior of the temple does not correspond with the outside; the floor is covered with silver matting, and the walls bear traces of gilding, but they are blackened by time and smoke. A catafalque rises in the centre, surrounded with strips of gilded serge, and there is to be seen the famous footprint of Buddha. To this sacred spot the pilgrims bring their offerings, cut paper, cups, dolls, and an immense number of toys, many of them being wrought in gold and silver.

“After staying a week on the mountain, and adding many pretty and interesting objects to my collection, our party returned to Arajik, the prince of Phrabat insisting on sending another guide with me, although my friend, the mandarin, with his attend-



ants and elephants, had kindly remained to escort me back to his village. There I again partook of his hospitality, and, taking leave of him the day following, I resumed my voyage up the river. Before night I arrived at Saraburi, the chief town of the province of Pakpriau, and the residence of the governor.

“Saraburi is a place of some extent, the population consisting chiefly of Siamese, Chinese, and Laotian agriculturists; and consists, like all towns and villages in Siam, of houses constructed of bamboo. They peep out, half hidden among the foliage along the banks of the river; beyond are rice-plantations, and, further in the background, extensive forests, inhabited solely by wild animals.

“On the morning of the 26th we passed Pakpriau, near which the cataracts begin. The waters were still high, and we had much trouble to fight against the current. A little to the north of this town I met with a poor family of Laotian Christians, of whom the good Father Larmandy had spoken to me. We moored our boat near their house, hoping that it would remain in safety while I explored the mountains in the neighborhood, and visited Patawi, which is the resort of the Laotian pilgrims, as Phrabat is of the Siamese.

“All the country from the banks of the river to the hills, a distance of about eight or nine miles, and the whole surface of this mountain-range, is covered with brown iron-ore and aërolites; where they occur in the greatest abundance, vegetation is scanty and consists principally of bamboo, but

it is rich and varied in those places where the detritus has formed a thicker surface of soil. The dense forests furnish gum and oil, which would be valuable for commerce if the indolent natives could be prevailed on to collect them. They are, however, infested with leopards, tigers, and tiger-cats. Two dogs and a pig were carried off from the immediate vicinity of the hut of the Christian guardians of our boat during our stay at Pakpriau; but the following day I had the pleasure of making the offending leopard pay for the robbery with his life, and his skin served me for a mat.

“Where the soil is damp and sandy I found numerous traces of these animals, but those of the royal tiger are more uncommon. During the night the inhabitants dare not venture out of doors; but in the day-time the creatures, satisfied with the fruits of their predatory rambles, skulk into their dens in the recesses of the woods. One day I went to explore the eastern part of the chain of Pakpriau, and, becoming excited in the chase of a wild boar, we soon lost ourselves in the forest. The animal made his way through the brushwood much more easily than we could, encumbered as we were with guns, hatchets, and boxes, and we ere long missed the scent. By the terrified cries of the monkeys we knew we could not be far from some tiger or leopard, doubtless, like ourselves, in search of prey; and, as night was drawing in, it became necessary to retrace our steps homeward for fear of some disagreeable adventure. With all our efforts, however, we

could not find the path. We were far from the border of the forest, and were forced to take up our abode in a tree, among the branches of which we made a sort of hammock. On the following day we regained the river.

“ I endeavored fruitlessly to obtain oxen or elephants to carry our baggage with a view of exploring the country, but all beasts of burden were in use for the rice-harvest. I therefore left my boat and its contents in charge of the Laotian family, and we set off, like pilgrims, on foot for Patawi, on a fine morning with a somewhat cloudy sky, which recalled to me the pleasant autumn days of my own country. My only companions were K<sup>ü</sup>e and my young Laotian guide. We followed for three hours, through forests infested with wild beasts, the road to Korat, and at last reached Patawi. As at Phrabat, there is a bell, both at the foot of the mount and at the entrance of a long and wide avenue leading to the pagoda, which the pilgrims ring on arriving, to inform the good genii of their presence and bespeak a favorable hearing of their prayers. The mount is isolated, and about 450 feet in height ; its formation is similar to that of Phrabat, but, although its appearance is equally grand, it presents distinct points of variation. Here are not to be seen those masses of rock, piled one upon another, as if hurled by the giants in a combat like that fabled of old. Patawi seems to be composed of one enormous rock, which rises almost perpendicularly like a wall, excepting the centre



portion, which towards the south hangs over like a roof, projecting eighteen or twenty feet. At the first glance might be recognized the action of water upon a soil originally clay.

“ There are many footprints similar to those of Phrabat, and in several places are to be seen entire trunks of trees in a state of petrification lying close to growing individuals of the same species. They have all the appearance of having been just felled, and it is only on testing their hardness with a hammer that one feels sure of not being mistaken. An ascent of several large stone steps leads, on the left hand, to the pagoda, and on the right, to the residence of the talapoins, or priests, who are three in number, a superior and two assistants, appointed to watch and pay reverence to the precious ‘ rays ’ of Somanakodom. Were the authors who have written about Buddhism ignorant of the signification of the word ‘ ray ’ employed by the Buddhists? Now, in the Siamese language, the same word which means ‘ ray ’ signifies also shadow, and it is through respect for their deity that the first meaning is applied.

“ The priests were much surprised to see a ‘ farang ’ (foreigner) in their pagoda, but some trifling gifts soon established me in their good graces. The superior was particularly charmed with a magnet which I gave him, and amused himself with it for a long time, uttering cries of delighted admiration as he saw it attract and pick

up all the little pieces of metal which he placed near it.

“ I went to the extreme north of the mount, where some generous being has kindly had constructed, for the shelter of travellers, a hall, such as is found in many places near pagodas. The view here is indescribably splendid, and I cannot pretend to do justice either with pen or pencil to the grand scenes which here and elsewhere were displayed before my eyes. I can but seize the general effect and some of the details ; all I can promise to do is to introduce nothing which I have not seen. Hitherto all the views I had seen in Siam had been limited in extent, but here the beauty of the country is exhibited in all its splendor. Beneath my feet was a rich and velvety carpet of brilliant and varied colors ; an immense tract of forest, amidst which the fields of rice and the unwooded spots appeared like little streaks of green ; beyond, the ground, rising gradually, swells into hills of different elevations ; farther still to the north and east, in the form of a semicircle, is the mountain-chain of Phrabat and that of the kingdom of Muang-Lôm ; and in the extreme distance those of Korat, fully sixty miles distant. All these join one another, and are, in fact, but a single range. But how describe the varieties of form among all these peaks ! In one place they seem to melt into the vapory rose-tints of the horizon, while nearer at hand the peculiar structure and color of the rocks bring out more strongly the richness of the vegetation ; there, again, are deep sha-

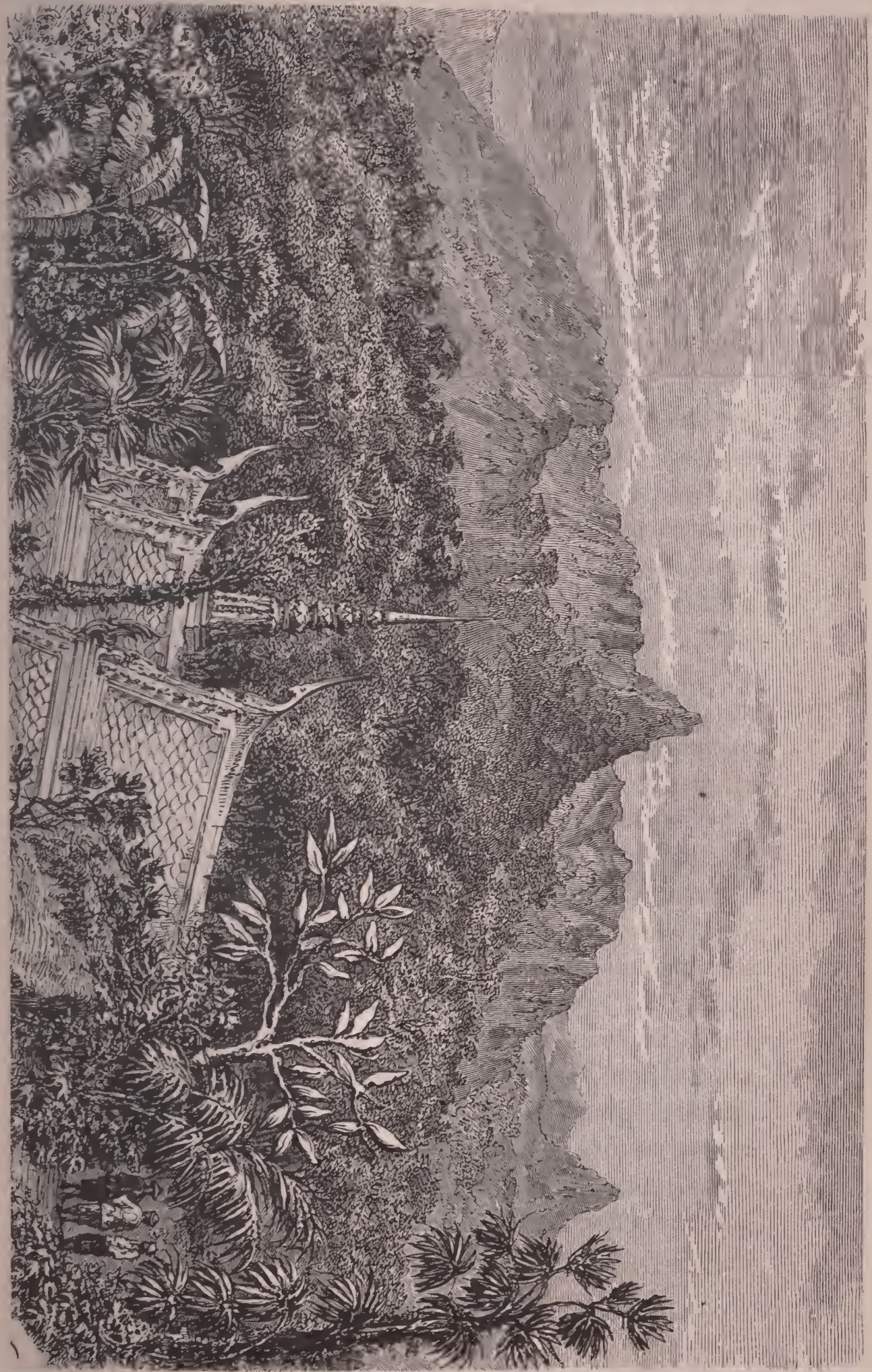
dows vying with the deep blue of the heaven above ; everywhere those brilliant sunny lights, those delicate hues, those warm tones, which make the *tout ensemble* perfectly enchanting. The spectacle is one which the eye of a painter can seize and revel in, but which his brush, however skillful, can transfer most imperfectly to his canvas.

“ At the sight of this unexpected panorama a cry of admiration burst simultaneously from all mouths. Even my poor companions, generally insensible to the beauties of nature, experienced a moment of ecstasy at the sublimity of the scene. ‘ Oh ! *di, di !*’ (beautiful,) cried my young Laotian guide ; and when I asked Kïe what he thought of it, ‘ Oh ! master,’ he replied, in his mixed jargon of Latin, English, and Siamese, ‘ the Siamese see Buddha on a stone, and do not see God in these grand things. I am pleased to have been to Patawi.’

“ On the opposite side, viz. the south, the picture is different. Here is a vast plain, which extends from the base of Patawi and the other mountains beyond Ayuthia, whose high towers are visible in the distance, 120 miles off. At the first glance one distinguishes what was formerly the bed of the sea, this great plain having taken the place of an ancient gulf : proof of which is afforded by numerous marine shells, many of which I collected in a perfect state of preservation ; while the rocks, with their footprints and fossil shells, are indicative of some great change at a still earlier period.



A VIEW OF THE MOUNTAINS OF KORAT FROM PATAYI







“ Every evening some of the good Laotian mountaineers came to see the ‘farang.’ These Laotians differ slightly from the Siamese: they are more slender, have the cheek-bones more prominent, and have also darker complexions. They wear their hair long, while the Siamese shave half of the head, leaving the hair to grow only on the top. They deserve praise for their intrepidity as hunters, if they have not that of warriors. Armed with a cutlass or bow, with which latter weapon they adroitly launch, to a distance of one hundred feet, balls of clay hardened in the sun, they wander about their vast forests, undismayed by the jaguars and tigers infesting them. The chase is their principal amusement, and, when they can procure a gun and a little Chinese powder, they track the wild boar, or, lying in wait for the tiger or the deer, perch themselves on a tree or in a little hut raised on bamboo stakes.

“ Their poverty borders on misery, but it mainly results from excessive indolence, for they will cultivate just sufficient rice for their support; this done, they pass the rest of their time in sleep, lounging about the woods, or making excursions from one village to another, paying visits to their friends on the way.

“ At Patawi I heard much of Korat, which is the capital of the province of the same name, situated five days’ journey northeast of Pakpriaou—that is, about 120 miles—and I determined, if possible, to visit it by and by. It appears to be a rich country, producing, especially, silk of good quality. Caout-



chouc-trees abound, but are neglected by the inhabitants, who are probably ignorant of their value. I brought back a magnificent specimen of the gum, which was much admired by the English merchants at Bangkok. Living, according to report, is fabulously cheap; six fowls may be purchased for a *fuang*, (37 centimes,) 100 eggs for the same sum, and all other things in proportion. But to get there one has to cross the famous forest of 'the King of the Fire,' which is visible from the top of Patawi, and it is only in the dry season that it is safe to attempt this; during the rains both the water and the atmosphere are fatally pestilential. The superstitious Siamese do not dare to use fire-arms there, from fear of attracting evil spirits who would kill them.

"During all the time I spent on the top of the mountain, the chief priest was unremitting in his attentions to me. He had my luggage carried into his own room, gave me up his mats to add to mine, and in other ways practiced self-denial to make me as comfortable as was in his power. The priests complain much of the cold in the rainy season, and of the torrents which then rush from the summit of the mountain; they are also greatly disturbed by the tigers, which, driven from the plains by the inundations, take refuge on the high ground, and carry away their dogs and fowls out of the very houses. But their visits are not confined to that period of the year. About ten o'clock on the second night of my stay the dogs suddenly began to utter plaintive howls. 'A tiger! a tiger!' cried my Laotian, who

was lying near me. I started up, seized my gun, and half opened the door; but the profound darkness made it impossible to see anything, or to go out without uselessly exposing myself. I therefore contented myself with firing off my gun to frighten the creature. The next morning we found one of our dogs gone.

“ We scoured the neighborhood for about a week, and then set off once more by water for Bangkok, as I wished to put my collections in order and send them off.

“ The places which two months previously had been deep in water were now dry, and everywhere around their dwellings the people were digging their gardens and beginning to plant vegetables. The horrible mosquitoes had reappeared in greater swarms than ever, and I pitied my poor servants, who, after rowing all day, could obtain no rest at night.

“ During the day, especially in the neighborhood of Pakpriau, the heat was intense, the thermometer being ordinarily at 90° Fahrenheit (28° Reaumur) in the shade, and 140° Fahrenheit (49° Reaumur) in the sun. Luckily, we had no longer to contend with the current, and our boat, though heavily laden, proceeded rapidly. We were about three hours' sail from Bangkok, when I perceived a couple of European boats, and in a room built for travellers near a pagoda I recognized three English captains of my acquaintance, one of whom had brought me to Singapore. They were, with their wives, enjoying a

picnic, and, on seeing me, insisted on my joining them and partaking of the repast.

“ I reached Bangkok the same day, and was still uncertain as to a lodging, when M. Wilson, the courteous Danish consul, came to me, and kindly offered the hospitality of his magnificent house.

“ I consider the part of the country which I had just passed through extremely healthy, except, perhaps, during the rains. It appears that in this season the water, flowing down from the mountains and passing over a quantity of poisonous detritus, becomes impregnated with mineral substances, gives out pestilential miasmata, and causes the terrible jungle-fever, which, if it does not at once carry off the victim, leaves behind it years of suffering. My journey, as has been seen, took place at the end of the rainy season and when the floods were subsiding ; some deleterious exhalations, doubtless, still escaped, and I saw several natives attacked with intermittent fever, but I had not had an hour's illness. Ought I to attribute this immunity to the regimen I observed, and which had been strongly recommended to me—abstinence, all but total, from wine and spirits, and drinking only tea, never cold water ? I think so ; and I believe by such a course one is in no great danger.”



## CHAPTER XIII.

## FROM BANGKOK TO CHANTABOUN—A MISSIONARY JOURNEY IN 1835.

SOON after his return from Phrabat and Patawi, Mouhot set out upon another journey, this time to the southward and eastward of Bangkok. These excursions were preparatory to the more prolonged and adventurous tour of exploration in Cambodia and Laos; and Chantaboun and the islands of the gulf lay directly in his way by the route on which he had determined to enter the former country. For many years the region on the eastern shore of the gulf has been more or less familiar to the foreign residents in Bangkok. So long ago as 1835 the Protestant missionaries explored and mapped out, with a good degree of accuracy, the coast-line from the mouth of the Meïnam to the mouth of the Chantaboun River. Extracts from the journal of Dr. Bradley, the oldest of the American missionaries now resident in Siam, have been recently published, and give an interesting sketch of the country as it then was, as well as of the modes of travel nearly forty years ago, and the beginnings of the civilization in which,

since that time, Siam has made such extraordinary progress.

Dr. Bradley, accompanied by another missionary and wife, made his journey in the first vessel ever built in Siam on a European model. A young nobleman, who has since then become very distinguished by reason of his interest in scientific pursuits of every kind, and his attainments in various branches of knowledge, had built at Chantaboun a brig which he had named the "Ariel," and was about returning from Bangkok to that port. With the liberality and kindness by which his conduct towards the missionaries has always been characterized, he invited Dr. Bradley and his colleague to be his guests on the return voyage. Dr. Bradley thus speaks of the "Ariel."

"Went aboard of the brig Ariel to have a look at the first square-rigged vessel ever made in Siam, and brought up a few days since from Chantaboun to present to the king. Considering that this is the first essay made in this country to imitate European ship-building, that the young nobleman had but poor models, if any, to guide him, and that all his knowledge of ship-building has been gathered by here and there an observation of foreign vessels in port, this brig certainly reflects very great credit on his creative genius. Not only this, but other facts also indicate that the young nobleman is endowed with an uncommonly capacious mind for a Siamese. It appears that he is building at Chantaboun several vessels of from 300 to 400 tons burthen. His wife has just left our house,

LION ROCK, AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE PORT OF CHIANTABOUN.







having spent the evening with Mrs. B. She possesses many interesting qualities, and like her husband is fond of the society of Europeans and Americans. Her attendants were three or four females who paddled the sampan in which she came, and carried her betel-box and other accompaniments. They remained at the door in a crouching posture, while their mistress visited Mrs. B. Her dress consisted of a phanung of ordinary cloth, a Birinese jacket of crimson crape, a scarlet sash of the same material, and a leaden-colored shawl of the richest damask silk."

All preparations being made for the excursion, and an abundant supply of Christian tracts laid in for distribution among the natives as opportunity might offer, Dr. Bradley's narrative continues, under date of November 12th, 1835 :

" One of the most delightful mornings I have seen since I left my dear native land. While the brig *Ariel* floated down with the tide, I called upon my brethren in company with my wife, when I took leave of her for the first time since we were married. The brig had made more progress than we were aware, which subjected us to the inconvenience of overtaking her in an open boat under a burning sun. She was under full press of sail before we reached her, but with much exertion on our part to inspire our paddlers to lay out more strength, by crying out in the Chinese tongue *qui qui*, and in the Siamese *reow reow*, and by a full souled response on their part, we reached the brig at 12 A. M. We were somewhat disappointed in finding the cabin exclu-

sively occupied by the mother and sisters of Luang Nai Sit, who being high in rank as females, must of course have the best accommodations on board. The mother is allied to the royal family, and consequently ranks higher than her husband, the p'ra-k'lang, though he is one of the first in point of office, being commander-in-chief of the Siamese forces, and prime minister and minister of foreign affairs. But Luang Nai Sit did all he could to make us comfortable on deck, spreading a double awning over us, one of thin canvas, and the other of attap leaves. Our pride was somewhat uncomfortably tried by finding ourselves dependent upon K'oon Klin, the wife of Luang Nai Sit, for the common comforts of shipboard. But it is due to her and her husband to say that they were both very polite, and evidently regretted that they could not then make us perfectly comfortable. They anxiously encouraged us with the promise that after a little time they would have matters in a better state, saying that their mother and sisters would leave the brig at Paknam, and give us the occupancy of the cabin.

“The more I dwell upon it, the more I am interested in the Providence that has brought us on board this vessel. But it may be asked, What is there peculiarly interesting in it? Why, here is a new Siamese brig, recently presented to the king of Siam, as the first specimen of a successful imitation of European ship-building, on her first voyage, volunteered by one of the first men in the kingdom to bear a company of missionaries to a province of Siam, carrying the everlasting gospel to a people who have



never heard it, and who, to use the expression of the nobleman who has volunteered to take us thither, 'have no God, no religion, and greatly need the labors of missionaries among them.'

"On awaking the next morning, I find that we are lying at anchor opposite Paknam, where the mother and sisters of our noble friend are to disembark. It is truly affecting to witness the kind attentions of Luang Nai Sit, and to observe how ready he is to anticipate our wants, and prepare to meet them. Last evening, while we were singing, a company of native singers removed their seats at the fore-castle, and sitting down near to us, began to bawl out in the native style. Luang Nai Sit soon came to us and requested that we should go to the upper deck, and take seats which he had prepared for us; saying, 'There is too much confusion for you to stay here; go up yonder, and bless God undisturbed.'

"These native singers, I am informed, are now practicing with a view to sing to the white elephant at Chantaboun. They sang many times a day, of which I have become heartily sick.

"We weighed anchor very early in the morning of the 14th, and sailed with the tide in our favor for the bar. We were interested in witnessing the out-gushings of maternal and filial affection of the noble relatives just before we sailed from Paknam. Luang Nai Sit exhibited much of it on parting with his mother, and she was tenderly moved on taking leave of her son and grandchildren. [One of the latter was a little boy, who has recently become prime

minister and minister of war.] We noticed that their tears were allowed to flow only in the cabin, out of sight of their slaves. On deck, and when in the act of parting, they were solemn and perfectly composed. A little after sunrise we came in sight of the mountains of Keo, which to me was a peculiarly gratifying sight. I had for months sighed after something of the kind to interrupt the dead monotony of Bangkok. There, do what you may by the means of telescopes and towers, you will discover nothing but one unbroken plain."

We condense Dr. Bradley's journal from this point, omitting unnecessary details of the voyage.

"Arose at four in the morning of the 15th, and found that we were at anchor a little south of the Keo Mountains, having Koh Chang or See Chang on the west, eight miles distant, and the coast of See Maha Racha on the east, five miles distant. I know not when I have been so delighted with natural scenery as at this time. Not a cloud was seen in the heavens. The moon walked in brightness amid myriads of twinkling suns and shining worlds. A balmy and gentle breeze just ruffled the bosom of the deep. The wonted confusion of the deck was perfectly hushed. Lofty mountains and a rugged and romantic coast darkened the eastern horizon. At five o'clock Luang Nai Sit invited us to go ashore with him. We readily accepted the invitation and accompanied our friend to the village of See Maha Racha, attended by his body guard, armed with guns, swords, and lances. The scenery, as the dawn brightened, was most exhilarating. The moun-

tains, hills, and plains were covered with vegetation in the liveliest green, with here and there a cultivated spot. As we approached the settlement from the west, at our right was a rock bound coast. Just in the background of this, and parallel with it, was an admirably undulated ridge which seemed to be composed of hill rolled close upon hill. At our left were islands of lofty white-capped rocks. Farther removed, at the east, were mountains towering behind mountains. Before us was an extensive plain bounded with mountains far in the distance. We reached the village a little after sunrise, which we found to contain 300 or 400 souls, chiefly Siamese. It was a matter of not a little regret that we had no tracts to give them. The people seemed to live in somewhat of a tidy manner, not very unlike a poor villager in our own country. Still their houses were built of bamboo, and elevated, according to the Siamese custom, as on stilts. We called at several houses, and found the females engaged in eating their rice. We attempted to penetrate the jungle behind the settlement, but did not go far, as there seemed to be but little prospect that we should descry other settlements.

“ Having spent a part of an hour in surveying the village, we followed our honorable guide along the beach, among immense ferruginous and quartz rocks having apparently been undermined by the restless ocean, and these were interlaid with small seashells of great variety. On the one hand we had the music of the roaring tide, on the other an admirable jungle, overhanging the beach from the east,



and thus protecting us from the blaze of the rising sun, while the air was perfumed with many a flower. Several boatloads of Luang Nai Sit's retinue soon came off the brig to the shore, which composed a company of fifty or more. At length a boat came loaded with provisions for a picnic breakfast, all cooked and duly arranged on salvers. The whole company (ourselves excepted) sat down on the beach in three classes, and there partook of the repast with a keen relish. Luang Nai Sit and his brothers ate by themselves; the women, consisting of K'oon Klin, or wife of the chief, and her children and other high blood attendants, ate by themselves. After these had finished their breakfast, the multitude of dependents messed together. Meanwhile the natives of the village and vicinity flocked in, loaded with plantains, red peppers, ceri-leaves, cocoanuts, jack-fruit, etc., and presented them as tokens of respect to the son of their lord, the p'rak'lang, and to him they bowed and worshipped on their hands and knees. At 10 A. M. we returned to the brig in an uncovered boat, in company with K'oon Klin and her train. Luang Nai Sit could not, of course, return in the same boat with the women, as it would be a violation of Siamese custom. He came in another boat behind us. The sun was very powerful, and that, together with the crowd and confusion of the company in the absence of their chief, quite overcame me in my feebleness of health.

“ At 11 A. M. our anchor was again weighed, and we sailed very pleasantly before a gentle breeze, being continually in full sight of the main land at our

left, and the islands of Koh Kram, Sewalan, and a number of others on our right. The former is noted for the quantities of turtles which are caught on its coasts, the latter is a cluster of verdant spots, probably uninhabited by man. Much of the mainland which we have as yet passed is mountainous, diversified with extensive plains, and covered with lofty timber. With the aid of the brig's telescope we descried several villages on the shore."

After beating about for a night and a day in a good deal of uncertainty and some peril, (for the Siamese officers and crew were unskillful navigators,) "we were not a little disappointed on the morning of the 18th in supposing that we were entering the mouth of Chantaboun River, which proved to be but a passage between the island of Semet and the main coast. It seems that we have been beating for this passage between thirty and forty hours, and but a few miles from it all the time. The scenery about this place is quite charming, combining much of the romantic with the beautiful. Have sailed twenty or thirty miles this afternoon in full sight of the coast, passing many small islands, which have given us a very pleasing variety. Much of the coast is level near the sea, with towering mountains, several miles distant. One island which we passed near by is worthy of some notice. It is quite small, composed of rocks, which rise sixty or eighty feet above the water, and crowned with pleasant shrubbery. It has a wing extending out fifty feet or more, which is about thirty feet high, and through this there is a natural tunnel, having

much the appearance of an artificial arch of stone, and apparently large enough to allow a common sized boat to pass. Hence the islet is called Koh Löö.

“On the morning of the 19th, the curtains of a tempestuous night having been removed, very much to our joy we found that we were in sight of our desired haven, and we enjoyed much interesting scenery while tossing about during the day. There are many bold islands in this vicinity, with rocky bases, and crowned with luxuriant vegetation. Koh Ch'ang lies fifteen or twenty miles south of us. It is a large island, with lofty peaks, and it is said to be famous for elephants, and that there are several thousand souls upon it. Prit Prote are three small islands, interesting only as affording pleasant objects to the eye of the naturalist. Koh Nom Low is a very curious pinnacle near the entrance into the mouth of Chantaboun River. With a small base, it rises out of the sea probably 400 feet. The mouth of the river is admirably guarded by an arm of a mountain ridge, which extends out into the sea and embraces the harbor, which is also artificially protected by two batteries. The coast extends east by southeast. That part of it east of the river, in the immediate vicinity of the sea, is level, low, and covered with a thick jungle. The main body of the trees appear low, having interspersed among them many tall trees, with here and there small hills, handsomely attired. Parallel with this coast, and apparently ten miles from the sea, the mountain Sah



Bap towers into the clouds, and stretches a long way to the north and to the south. The coast west of the river is rugged and mountainous. In the apparent direction of the river there are several sublime peaks. As far as the eye can command, vegetation appears luxuriant, but is quite different from that of Bangkok. The cocoanut palm, which is the queen of all the jungles in that vicinity, is not to be seen here. The appearance of the water about the mouth of this river is perfectly clear, while that of the Meinam is extremely turbid."

At this point the missionaries' Siamese friend left them and proceeded in advance to Chantaboon. On the day following, Nov. 21st, "he sent back a small junk for us, which we gladly accepted, and took passage in her, starting in the morning, and expected of course that we should arrive at our destination early in the evening. But almost every rod of our way seemed beset with extraordinary obstacles. In the first place we had a strong contrary wind to contend with, which obliged us to beat till late in the afternoon with but little success. In the early evening the breeze became gentle, when, with great entreaty on our part, our boatmen were induced to take to their oars. Presently we found a strong current against us; and within the next half hour our boat touched the bottom of the channel, and became immovable in the mud. Now it seemed certain, that instead of reaching our destination early in the evening as we had hoped, we should be under the necessity of staying aboard

of our craft all night, exposed to the inclemency of the night air, and with but a scanty supply of food. It was well that we had taken a late breakfast, for a cup of tea with sea bread and cheese had to suffice both for our dinner and supper. With these we satisfied the cravings of hunger, being, I trust, thankful to God that we were so well fed. Having taken our frugal supper, we sought for places to lodge ourselves for the night. As for a cabin, of course there was none in such a junk. There were *holds*, but they were filled with luggage. My fellow travellers preferred to seek their rest on the open deck in a half-reclining posture, wrapped up in their cloaks. I found a place in the 'hinder part of the ship' just large enough to lie down in, where I spread my mattress and tried to sleep. About midnight the tide rose, and bore our junk away from the mud. But it was only a little time, when it was announced by a singular scraping on our boat's bottom, and by a tremendous scolding of a party of Chinamen whom we had met, that we had found another obstacle. It was soon revealed that we had got entangled in a fish-net belonging to the Chinamen. Here we were detained an hour or more in efforts to disengage our boat from the ropes of the fish-net. After this was done I know not what other impediments we met with, for I fell into a sleep.

“ At 4 A.M. it was announced that we had arrived at our destination. We shook off our slumbers and looked out, and behold our junk was anchored in front of a house with open doors, literally,

and windows without shutters, while a piercing, chilling wind was whistling through it. It proved to be, not in Chantaboun, but several miles below it at a Siamese dockyard. As all our boatmen had gone ashore, and we were left without a guide, we determined to 'stick to the ship' till full day, and accordingly lay down and took another nap. When we arose early in the morning, we were surprised to learn that Luang Nai Sit and his retinue had lodged in that bleak house the night before, and had gone up the river to Chantaboun, and that this was the place he designed to have us occupy while we sojourn in this part of Siam. This house assigned to us here is situated over the water, exposed to the strong north winds that blow from the opposite side of the river. It is built of bamboo slats and small poles, so as to operate as a kind of sieve for the bleak winds. The most of the floor is also of bamboo slats, and admits strong currents of air through them, while the waves are both heard and seen dashing beneath them. The roof is made of attap leaves, which rattle like hail in the wind. The best rooms in the house, two in number, are enclosed with bamboo slats and lined with cajung. These were politely assigned to us by our kind friend, who is ever ready to deny himself to oblige us. This would be a delightfully cool place in the spring and summer months, but at this season of the year it is unpleasantly chilly.

“ This place has no importance, only what is connected with the ship-building carried on here. There are now on the stocks not less than fifty



vessels, consisting of two ships of 300 or 400 tons burden, thirty or forty war-boats or junks, and a number of smaller craft."

On the following day the missionaries made an excursion up the river as high as the p'rak'lang's establishment, where "we left our boat and proceeded by land two or three miles to Bang Ka Chah. The river up to the place where we left it is exceedingly serpentine, the banks being low and overflowed by the tides, and covered with an impenetrable jungle of low timber.

"As we drew near the p'rak'lang's, there appeared pleasant fields of paddy, and at a distance a beautiful acclivity partially cleared, around which government is building extensive fortifications. The works are rapidly advancing. The circumference of the enclosure when finished will not vary much from two miles. The embankment is forty feet above the surface of the ground, and the depth of the ditch on the outside will increase it six feet. The earth is of a remarkably red color, and gives the embankment the appearance of solid brick. This is to be surrounded by a breastwork six feet high, with port-holes, and made of brick literally dug out of the earth, which, a few feet from the surface, possesses the consistence of brick that had been a little dried in the sun. Blocks eighteen inches in length, nine in breadth, and six in thickness, are cut out by Chinamen and Malays, which, with a little smoothing, are prepared for laying into the wall.

"We were objects of great curiosity to the na-

tives. Our *passport* was only to tell them that we came from Bangkok in Koon Sit's brig, and this was perfectly satisfactory. With the idea that Bang Ka Chah was but a little way onward, we continued to walk, being very much exhilarated by the sight of palmy plains, palmy hills and extensive rice plantations. The country appeared to have a first rate soil, and to be very extensively cultivated. The paddy fields were heavy laden and well filled. It was harvest time. In one direction you might see reapers ; in another gatherers of the sheaves ; in another threshers ; one with his buffaloes treading out the grain, another with his bin and rack, against which he was beating the sheaves. The lots were divided by foot-paths merely, consisting of a little ridge thrown up by the farmers.

“ In Bang Ka Chah we found a settlement of 4,000 or more Chinese. Our guide conducted us to a comfortable house, where, much to my comfort, we were offered a place to lie down, and presented with tea and fruit. We had not been in the place ten minutes, before we had attracted around us hundreds of men, women and children, who were as eager to examine us Americans as the latter once were to examine the Siamese twins. The inhabitants appeared remarkably healthy. I could not discover a sickly countenance among them. There were many very aged people. Children were particularly abundant and interesting. How inviting a harvest, thought I, is here for the future missionary. The houses are mostly built of brick after the common style of Chinese architecture.

The streets are crooked, narrow and filthy. At 4 o'clock, P.M., we returned to the house of Luang Nai Sit, who lives near his father, the p'rak'lang, where we were refreshed with a good dinner, after which we took to our boats and arrived at our lodgings at seven o'clock in the evening.

“ We have made an excursion to the town of Chantaboun. It is about nine miles from the place where we stay, being on the main branch of the river, while Bang Ka Chah is on a smaller one. After we passed the p'rak'lang's, there was much to be seen that was in no small degree interesting. The river was from sixty to eighty yards wide, apparently deep and exceedingly serpentine. The banks were generally cleared of wild timber, gently elevated, uniformly smooth, and cultivated. As we approached Chantaboun, the margin of the river was most charmingly graced with clumps of the bamboo, and several fields were bounded with the same tree. We passed not far from the foot of the lofty mountain Sah Bap, from which point we could also see several other mountains. The top of one was lost in the clouds. Near Chantaboun the river is quite lined on one side with Siamese war-junks on the stocks. The reigning passion of the government at present is to make preparations in this section of their country for defence against the Cochin-Chinese, and for aggressions against the same if need be.

“ We reached Chantaboun at two, P.M. The natives discovering us as we drew near their place, congregated by scores on the banks of the river to



look at us. They were exceedingly excited, the children particularly, and scarcely knew how to contain themselves. Some ran with all their might to proclaim in the most animated manner to the inhabitants ahead that we were coming. Others jumped up and down, laughing and hallooing most merrily. We preferred to pass up the river to the extreme end of the town, before we landed, that in coming down by land we might form some estimate of the amount of the inhabitants. The town is situated on both sides of the stream, which is probably eighty yards wide. As we passed along we observed one of the most pleasant situations occupied by a Roman Catholic chapel. Its appearance, together with some peculiarities in the inhabitants, led us to think that the Catholics had got a strong foothold here. We saw only four Siamese priests, and no temples. The houses on the river were built principally of bamboo and attap. They were small, elevated five or six feet above the ground, and wore the aspect of old age. The ground on which the town is situated rises gently from the river, and is a dry and sandy loam. There were a number of middling-sized junks lying in the river, which proves that the stream is sufficiently deep to admit of the passage of such craft.

“ Having reached the farthest extremity of the place, we landed and walked down the principal street. We were thronged with wondering multitudes, who were Cochin, Tachu, and Hokien-Chinese, with only here and there a Siamese. The inhabitants looked healthy, and were more perfectly

dressed than we usually observe in heathen villages in this climate. The day being far spent we could not prolong our stay more than one hour. When we got into our boat to return, the people literally surrounded us, although it was in the water. Some stood in the river waist-deep to get a look at the lady of the party, and petitioned that she should rise from her seat, that they might see how tall she was. As we pushed out into the river the multitudes shouted most heartily. There cannot be less than 8,000 or 10,000 souls in Chantaboun, and probably thousands in the immediate vicinity.

“ On our return we stopped at Luang Nai Sit's, and spent an hour or more. In looking about the premises we heedlessly entered a large bamboo house, where to our surprise we saw a monster of an elephant, and his excellency, the p'rak'lang, who beckoned to us to enter, and directed us to seats. We learned that this elephant was denominated white, and seemed to be an object of great religious veneration. He was as far from being white as black. There appeared to be a little white powder sprinkled upon his back. He was fastened to a post, and a man was feeding him with paddy-grass.

“ All the days that we have been in this place have been very uncomfortably cold. We have not only wanted winter clothes, but have found ourselves most comfortable when wrapped up in our cloaks till the middle and sometimes till after the middle of the day. The natives shiver like the as-

pen leaf, and they act much as an American in the coldest winter day. The northeast monsoon sweeps over the mountains, and I think produces a current downward from that high and cool region of air, which retains nearly its temperature till after it has passed this place.

“ It seems that there are a great number of settlements, within the circumference of a few miles, as large as Bang Ka Chah ; that the country is admirably watered by three rivers ; and that the soil is rich and peculiarly adapted to the growth of pepper, of which large quantities are raised. There is a small mountain near by, where it is said diamonds are procured. At Bang Ka Chah there is a remarkable cave in a mountain. The country intervening between Bang Ka Chah and Thamai is under a high state of cultivation, being almost exclusively occupied by Chinamen, who cultivate rice, tobacco, pepper, etc. The face of the country is pleasantly undulated. Thamai contains 400 or 500 souls, chiefly Chinese. Nung Boah lies east from this place about four miles by the course of the river. It is not a condensed settlement, but an agricultural and horticultural district, with thirty or forty dwellings, perhaps, on every square mile. It is situated on a large plain, a little distance from the foot of the mount Sah Bap. Not more than a quarter of the land is cultivated, while the remainder is covered with small and scrubby junglewood. Multitudes of charming flowers lined both sides of the paths as we walked from one farm to another ; and many a bird was seen of beautiful plumage and



some of pleasant note. The graceful tops of cocoa-nut trees we found a never-failing sign of a human dwelling, and sometimes of a cluster of them. The land is almost wholly occupied by Tachu-Chinese ; a few of them have Siamese wives ; the remainder are single men. They cultivate but small portions of land, which they bring under a high state of improvement. They raise chiefly sugarcane, pepper, and tobacco. The soil, being a rich loam, is well adapted to the culture of these articles, as well as of a great variety of horticultural plants.

“ We have continued our surveys to the southeast of this place, and visited Plieoo, a settlement south of Nung Boah. We left our boat at Barn-Chow-kow, which is a settlement of Siamese, consisting of about sixty families living in a very rural, and, for a Siamese, a very comfortable style, in the midst of groves of cocoa-nuts, interspersed with many a venerable jungle-tree. On either side of a gentle elevation on which their houses are scattered along a line of half a mile, are rice-fields far surpassing in excellence any I had before seen. The grain was nearly all out, and a large proportion of it gathered. They need no barns, and therefore have none. At this season of the year they have no rains to trouble them. The rice is threshed by buffaloes. All the preparation that is necessary for this is to smooth and harden a circle of ground 30 feet in diameter, and set a post in its centre. Siamese carts have wheels not less than twenty-five feet in circumference, set four or five feet apart,

with a small rack in which the sheaves are placed. These are drawn by a yoke of buffaloes. The person who loads the cart, guides the team by means of ropes, which are fastened to the septem of their nostrils by hooks.

“At Plieoo we first went into a blacksmith’s shop, where four Chinamen were employed. The master was very polite and did all he could think of to make us comfortable. He prepared his couch for us to rest upon, got us a cup of tea, etc. We gave him one of the histories of Christ, for which he was abundantly thankful. We next went to the market, where we disposed of a few books. Entering into the house of a Chinaman, we were surprised to find three Siamese priests. The master of the house had prepared a very neat dinner for one of his clerical guests, and was just in the act of sitting down on the floor to eat, as we entered. There was a frown on his brow as he saw us approach. Although he could read, he utterly refused to receive a tract. Being much in want of some refreshment, I proposed that he should let me have a dish of rice. He refused. I still pleaded for a little ; but he was determined that I should not be fed from the same table with his priest. After a little time we returned to our good friend the blacksmith, and merely suggested to him our want of food. The aged hospitable man seemed very happy that he could have an opportunity to render us such kindness, and hastened to prepare us a dinner. He went himself to market and purchased a variety of articles for our comfort. The table was soon

well supplied with rice, eggs, greens, and various nameless Chinese nick-nacks.

“ In the village of Plieoo there are only a few hundred souls, who are mostly Tachu-Chinese, and cannot read. Their wives are Siamese. We conclude, from what we were able to learn, that the vicinity is densely populated.”

The voyage back to Bangkok was comfortably made in a small junk furnished by Luang Nai Sit, and in company with his brother-in-law, an agreeable and intelligent Siamese. Dr. Bradley continues:

“ We have in tow an elegant boat, designed probably for some one of the nobles at Bangkok. It was manufactured at Semetgaam. The Siamese possess superior skill in making these boats. They have the very best materials the world can afford for such purposes. The boats consist generally of but one piece.

“ A large tree is taken and scooped out in the form of a trough. By some process, I know not what, the sides are then sprung outward, which draws the extremities into a beautiful curve upward. After this is done, the boat is admirably wrought and trimmed. The one we have in tow is about sixty feet in length and five in breadth. Compared with many, it is quite small. I have seen not a few that were nearly a hundred feet long and from six to eight feet wide, made in the way I have above described.

“ [Not long after the above was written, the writer learned that these boats are swelled out in their midships by means of fire, and that the curves of



their bows and sterns are increased by means of pieces of the same kind of timber so neatly fitted and firmly joined as to appear on a distant examination to be a continuation of the body of the boat.

“On the morning of December 16th, we were passing between Koh Samet and Sem Yah. After we passed this our course lay west-northwest to another cape called Sah Wa Larn. The wind was favorable but light, and we were becalmed in the heat of the day four hours or more. The heat was excessively oppressive. No shade on deck and my cabin a small place, not large enough to admit of my standing upright. Our vessel has been rowed much of the afternoon for the want of wind. Cast anchor just at evening a little east of Sah Wa Larn, having made less than twenty miles during the day. The coast about Lem Sing is very picturesque. West of this, till you come to Sah Wa Larn, it is uniformly level. The land appears to be entirely uncultivated. The forests are composed of large timber, their tops presenting a very uniform surface. I have much cause for gratitude to God that I find in my companion, Soot Chin Dah, a very attentive friend. He is desirous to render me all the assistance he can in acquiring the Siamese language, in which I hope I am making some proficiency by engaging with him in conversation.

“The scene between Koh Arat and Koh Yai, in the midst of which we were at anchor the next morning, is most charming. The distance from one to the other is about one mile. Arat is a small

island rising very abruptly many hundred feet above the sea. At the top is a rock of a conical form, which seems on the point of rolling down with a tremendous crash into the sea. Koh Yai is a much larger island, and hence its name. A little before us was the cape Samaasarn, shielded against the sea by immense white rocks. Just as the sun was rising, Soot Chin Dah invited me to accompany him to Koh Yai for a morning exercise. Our fine boat was manned with nineteen men, and we went off in princely style. We coasted some distance and then landed; whence we walked a long way, first on a sandy beach, and then among rocks composed of marine shells interlaid with coral and shells of infinite variety. The land was all one unbroken jungle. Much of the small timber was of a thorny kind, which seemed to bid defiance to human invasion. Our men were chiefly engaged in picking up shells suitable for gambling purposes. On our return we touched at Arat, where I amused myself a little time in climbing around craggy and stupendous rocks. After two hours we returned to our junk well prepared for breakfast. The hired cook, which Luang Nai Sit [the present Regent] had the goodness to provide for me, had my food all ready, consisting of a broiled chicken, salt and fresh eggs, and rice with tea. Soot Chin Dah eats by himself, sometimes in one place and sometimes in another. His food is very neatly served for him in a circular wooden tray. It is prepared by a Portuguese cook, and served by his inferior brother. When he is done eating, his brother, serang, assis-

tant serang, and cook eat of the remainder, sitting on the deck. They use neither knife, fork, nor spoon, their fingers serving the purposes of these instruments. The helmsman and his mate, who are masters of the junk and country-born Portuguese, eat by themselves in the style of the Siamese. The crew clan together in eating according to their nameless distinctions. Their main dependence is rice and fish. The former they eat out of the bark of a plantain tree rolled up at the sides and one end in the shape of a scoop shovel, or out of a most filthy-looking basket or cocoa-nut shell. There are three females on board who eat in the hold, where they remain almost constantly from morning to night. In the evening they come out to enjoy the fresh air, and have a most voluble chat with the men.

“About noon we anchored close to the shore of Sem Poo Chow, which is an abrupt and lofty promontory. Here three wild hogs made their appearance. Having looked upon us a few minutes they disappeared. It seemed wonderful that they could inhabit such a bluff, for a misstep would plunge them into the abyss below.

“On the evening of the 19th, our captain ordered the anchor to be dropped, as we were on the bar at the mouth of the Meinam River, eight or ten miles from Paknam. We have had a good view of every mile of the coast along which we have passed to-day, and I may with but little qualification say the same of all the coast between this and Chantaboun. The coast north of Bangplasoi is low, without so much



as a rock or hill to break the evenness of the jungle. We saw distinctly the entrance of Bangpakong River, its mouth appearing as large as that of the Meinam. I have spent much of this day in finishing charts of Chantaboun and the coast from thence to Paknam.

Concerning the provinces adjacent to Chantaboun, Sir John Bowring makes the following statements :

“To the north of *Chantaburi*, (which means the nutmeg country,) stretching towards the east, is a range of mountains forming an almost circular barrier, whose defiles are guarded by a tribe called *Xong*, who carefully exclude all visitors that are objects of distrust. The tribe recognizes a chief, whose authority is said to be absolute. Crimes are rare, but are punished with extreme severity.

“The *Xong*, or *Chong*, are reported to have had their origin in migrations from the Kareens, and a variety of fugitives from various neighboring States, seeking an asylum in regions so difficult to penetrate.

“The dress of the men consists of a cotton cloth simply tied round the waist ; that of the women, of a coarse petticoat, with various colored stripes. They are accused of poisoning the wells and fountains on their frontiers, so as to prevent the influx of strangers. They supply the market of Chantaburi with forest woods, gutta-percha, wax, cardamoms, pitch, resins, and eagle-wood, which they bring when the river is flooded, and exchange principally for iron ware, salt, kapi, and objects of primary necessity.

“ The collection of wax exposes them to many dangers. The wild bees, which are of gigantic size, usually build their cells on the top branches of a colossal tree, at the height of 150 feet. The bees take flight, having been driven away by large and smoky fires, kindled at the foot of the trees ; and the next day, the Xong mount these trees by driving into the trunk blades of hard wood, which they mount by standing on one while they force another with their hands into the trunk above. Before attempting to ascend, they offer up a sacrifice to the genius of the place ; and having approached the combs, they loosen them with a long and light bamboo, which causes them to fall to the ground.

“ Pitch is collected by cutting a deep hole at the foot of the tree, in the shape of an oven ; a fire is kindled, but not allowed to burn long, and the Xong collect the pitch as it exudes from day to day. Its quality is much valued ; mixed with resin, it is employed for ships, and in its liquid state for painting. Torches are manufactured by digging a hole in the ground, into which pieces of rotten wood are thrown, and pitch being poured in, a thick paste is made and moulded by the hand. It is then enveloped in long leaves, and being cased in bark, rattan threads tie the whole compactly together.

“ Pallegoix says that a great quantity of precious stones are collected in the neighborhood of the *Sabab* mountain, and that they are found still more abundantly on the frontiers of the *Xong* tribes, where they are gathered by the peasantry, who sell the whole at prices varying from sixteen to sixty

francs per pound. Among the stones so collected, the governor of Chantaboun showed him rock-crystals, cat's eyes as large as a nut, topazes, hyacinths, quartz, sapphires of deep blue, and rubies of various colors. The bishop says that, in wandering through the Chantaboun mountains, they collected in an hour two handfuls of precious stones. There are certain localities in which the king forbids their collection, except on his own account."



## CHAPTER XIV.

### MOUHOT'S VISIT TO CHANTABOON AND THE ISLANDS OF THE GULF.

SINCE the date of the missionary journey recorded in the last chapter, Chantaboun has come to be a place of considerable commercial importance, being, without much doubt, the second port in the kingdom. There is a custom-house at the entrance of the Chantaburi River, and "a considerable trade," says Bowring, "is carried on, principally with Cochin China, and by the Cochin Chinese, among whom the Catholic missionaries claim about one thousand as their converts. Chantaburi has six thousand inhabitants—Siamese, Chinese, and Cochin Chinese. There is a public market-place, a manufactory of arrack, and many pagodas. In consequence of the cheapness of wood, and the facility of conveying it down the river, the building of ships is generally in a state of activity. About a dozen ships come annually from China, with the produce of that country; and they carry away pepper, cardamoms, gamboge, eagle-wood, hides, ivory, sugar, wax, tobacco, salt fish, and other commodities,

which are also shipped to the straits settlements. There is much cultivation in the neighborhood of the town, and the fruits of the field and the garden are various and excellent. The planting of coffee has lately been introduced, and the quality is said to be good.

“The inhabitants of the forests of Chantaburi are accustomed to chase the wild beasts with fire-arms and nets; but they attack the rhinoceros armed with solid bamboos, of which one end has been hardened by exposure to the fire and sharpened; they incite the animal, by loud cries and clapping their hands, to meet them, which he is wont to do by rushing violently upon them, opening and closing his wide mouth; they attack him in front, and drive the bamboos violently into his throat with surprising dexterity, taking flight on all sides. The animal in his agony throws himself on the ground, and becoming exhausted by the effusion of blood and the extremity of his suffering, he soon becomes the prey of his courageous assailants. All the passages to a district are sometimes closed with nets, and fire being applied to the jungle, the wild animals are destroyed as they seek to escape.”

Mouhot describes his voyage to Chantaboun, and his experience among the islands of the gulf, as follows :

“My intention now was to visit Cambodia, but for this my little river boat was of no use. The only way of going to Chantaboun was by embarking in one of the small Chinese junks or fishing vessels, which I accordingly did on the 28th of Decem-





PORT OF CHANTABOUN.





ber, taking with me a new servant, called Niou, a native of Annam, and who, having been brought up at the college of the Catholic priests at Bangkok, knew French well enough to be very useful to me as an interpreter. The boat was inconveniently small, and we were far from comfortable; for, besides myself and servant, there were on board two men and two children about thirteen. I was much pleased with the picturesque aspect of all the little islands in the gulf; but our voyage was far longer than we expected, three days being its usual duration, while, owing to a strong head-wind, it occupied us for eight. We met with an accident which was fatal to one of our party, and might have been so to all of us. On the night of the 31st December, our boat was making rapid way under the influence of a violent wind. I was seated on the little roof of leaves and interlaced bamboo, which formed a sort of protection to me against the rain and cold night air, bidding adieu to the departing year, and welcoming in the new; praying that it might be a fortunate one for me, and, above all, that it might be full of blessings for all those dear to me. The night was dark; we were but two miles from land, and the mountains loomed black in the distance. The sea alone was brilliant with that phosphoric light so familiar to all voyagers on the deep. For a couple of hours we had been followed by two sharks, who left behind them a luminous and waving track. All was silent in our boat; nothing was to be heard but the wind whistling among the rigging and the rushing of the waves: and I felt at that midnight hour

—alone, and far from all I loved—a sadness which I vainly tried to shake off, and a disquietude which I could not account for. Suddenly we felt a violent shock, immediately followed by a second, and then the vessel remained stationary. Every one cried out in alarm; the sailors rushed forward; in a moment the sail was furled and torches lighted, but, sad to say, one of our number did not answer to his name. One of the young boys, who had been asleep on deck, had been thrown into the sea by the shock. Uselessly we looked for the poor lad, whose body doubtless became the prey of the sharks. Fortunately for us, only one side of the boat had touched the rock, and it had then run aground on the sand: so that after getting it off we were able to anchor not far from the shore.

“ On the 3rd January, 1859, after having crossed the little gulf of Chantaboun, the sea being at the time very rough, we came in sight of the famous Lion Rock, which stands out like the extremity of a cape at the entrance of this port. From a distance it resembles a lion couchant, and it is difficult to believe that Nature unassisted has formed this singular colossus. The Siamese—a superstitious race—hold this stone in great veneration, as they do everything that appears to them extraordinary or marvellous. It is said that the captain of an English ship, once anchored in the port, seeing the lion, proposed to buy it, and that, on the governor of the place refusing the offer, he pitilessly fired all his guns at *the poor animal*. This has been recorded in Siamese



verse, with a touching complaint against the cruelty of the Western barbarians.

“ On the 4th January, at eight o'clock in the morning, we arrived at the town of Chantaboun, which stands on the bank of the river, six or seven miles from the mountain range. The Christian Annamites form nearly a third of the population, the remainder being composed of Chinese merchants, and some heathen Annamites and Siamese. The Annamites are all fishers, who originally came from Cochin China to fish in the northern part of the Gulf of Siam, and settled at the Chantaboun. Every day, while the cold weather lasts, and the sea is not too rough, they cast their nets in the little bays on the coast, or in the sheltered water among the islands.

“ The commerce of this province is inconsiderable, compared with what it might be from its situation ; but the numerous taxes, the grinding exactions of the chiefs, and the usury of the mandarins, added to the hateful system of slavery, keep the bulk of the people in a ruinous state of prostration. However, in spite of a scanty population, they manage to export to Bangkok a great quantity of pepper, chiefly cultivated by the Chinese at the foot of the mountains ; a little sugar and coffee of superior quality ; mats made of rushes, which meet with a ready sale in China ; tobacco, great quantities of salted and dried fish, dried leeches, and tortoise-shell. Every Siamese subject, on attaining a certain height, has to pay to government an impost or annual tribute equivalent to six ticals (eighteen

francs). The Annamites of Chantaboun pay this in eagle-wood, and the Siamese in gamboge; the Chinese in gum-lac, every four years, and their tribute amounts to four ticals. At the close of the rainy season, the Annamite Christians unite in parties of fifteen or twenty, and set out under the conduct of an experienced man, who heads the expedition, and indicates to the others the trees which contain the eagle-wood; for all are not equally skilled in distinguishing those which produce it; a degree of experience is requisite for this, which can only be acquired by time, and thus much useless and painful labor is avoided. Some remain in the mountains, others visit the large islands of Ko-Xang or Ko-Khut, situated southeast of Chantaboun. The eagle-wood is hard and speckled, and diffuses a powerful aromatic odor when burnt. It is used at the incrimation of the bodies of princes and high dignitaries, which are previously kept in the coffins for a twelvemonth. The Siamese also employ it as a medicine. The wood of the tree which yields it—the *Aquilaria Agallocha* of Roxburgh—is white, and very soft; and the trunk must be cut down, or split in two, to find the eagle-wood, which is in the interior. The Annamites make a kind of secret of the indications by which they fix upon the right trees, but the few instructions given me put me on the right track. I had several cut down, and the result of my observations was, that this substance is formed in the cavities of the trees, and that as they grow older it increases in quantity. Its presence may be pretty surely ascertained by the pe-

culiar odor emitted, and the hollow sound given out on striking the trunk.

“ Most of the Chinese merchants are addicted to gambling, and to the use of opium ; but the Annamite Christians are better conducted. The nature of these Annamites is very different from that of the Siamese, who are an effeminate and indolent race, but liberal and hospitable, simple-minded, and without pride. The Annamites are short in stature, and thin, lively, and active ; they are choleric and vindictive, and extremely proud ; even among relations there is continual strife and jealousy. The poor and the wretched meet with no commiseration, but great respect is accorded to wealth. However, the attachment of the Christians to their priests and missionaries is very great, and they do not hesitate to expose themselves to any dangers in their behalf. I must likewise own that, in all my dealings with the pagan Annamites, whose reverence for their ancestors induces them to hold fast their idolatry, I experienced generosity and kindness from them, both at Chantaboun and in the islands.

“ The missionaries at Bangkok having given me a letter of introduction to their fellow-laborer at Chantaboun, I had the pleasure of making acquaintance with the worthy man, who received me with great cordiality, and placed at my disposal a room in his modest habitation. The good father has resided for more than twenty years at Chantaboun, with the Annamites whom he has baptized, content and happy amidst indigence and solitude. I found him, on my arrival, at the height of felicity ; a new



brick chapel, which had been for some time in course of construction, and the funds required for which had been saved out of his modest income, was rapidly progressing, and promised soon to replace the wooden building in which he then officiated. I passed sixteen days very agreeably with him, sometimes hunting on Mount Sabab, at other times making excursions on the rivers and canals. The country greatly resembles the province of Pakpriau, the plain being, perhaps, still more desert and uncultivated; but at the foot of the mountains, and in some of the delightful valleys, pepper is grown in some quantity by the Chinese.

“I bought for twenty-five ticals a small boat to enable me to visit the isles of the gulf. The first I landed at was named Konam-sao; it is in the form of a cone, and nearly 250 metres\* in height, but only two miles in circumference. Like all the other islands in this part of the gulf, it is of volcanic origin. The rocks which surround it make the access difficult; but the effect produced by the richness and bright green of the vegetation is charming. The dry season, so agreeable for European traveling, from the freshness of the nights and mornings, is in Siam a time of stagnation and death for all nature; the birds fly to the neighborhood of houses, or to the banks of the rivers, which furnish them with nourishment; rarely does their song come to enchant the listener; and the fishing-eagle alone utters his hoarse and piercing cry every time the

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\* A metre is equivalent to 3 feet 3¼ inches.

wind changes. Ants swarm everywhere, and appear to be, with the mosquitoes and crickets, the only insects that have escaped destruction.

“ Nowhere did I find in these islands the slightest trace of path or stream ; and it was extremely difficult to advance at all through the masses of wild vines and interwoven branches. I was forced to make my way, hatchet in hand, and returned at night exhausted with the heat and fatigue.

“ The greater portion of the rocks in the elevated parts of these islands is elementary, and preserves traces of their ancient deposit beneath the waters. They have, however, undergone considerable volcanic changes, and contain a number of veins and irregular deposits of the class known as contact deposits, that are formed near the junction of stratified rocks with intruded igneous masses.

“ On the 26th we set sail for the first of the Koman Islands, for there are three, situated close together, bearing this name. The largest is only twelve miles from the coast. Some fishing-eagles, a few black doves, and a kind of white pigeon were the only winged creatures I saw. Iguanas are numerous, and when in the evening they come out of their retreats, they make such a noise in walking heavily over the dead leaves and branches, that one might suppose it caused by animals of a much larger size.

“ Toward evening, the tide having fallen, I allowed my boat to ground on the mud, which I had remarked during the day to be like a peat-bog impregnated with volcanic matter ; and during the

whole night so strong a sulphurous odor escaped from it, that I imagined myself to be over a submarine volcano.

“ On the 28th we passed on to the second island, which is higher and more picturesque than the other. The rocks which surround it give it a magnificent effect, especially in a bright sunlight, when the tide is low. The isles of the Patates owe their name to the numerous wild tubers found there.

“ I passed several days at Cape Liaut, part of the time being occupied in exploring the many adjacent islands. It is the most exquisite part of the gulf, and will bear comparison, for its beauty, with the Strait of Sunda, near the coast of Java. Two years ago, when the king visited Chantaboun, they built for him on the shore, at the extremity of the cape, a house and kiosk, and, in memory of that event, they also erected on the top of the mountain a small tower, from which a very extensive view may be enjoyed.

“ I also made acquaintance with Ko-Kram, the most beautiful and the largest of all the islands north of the gulf between Bangkok and Chantaboun. The whole island consists of a wooded mountain-range, easy of access, and containing much oligist iron. On the morning of the 29th, at sunrise, the breeze lessened, and when we were about three miles from the strait which separates the Isle of Arec from that of the ‘ Cerfs,’ it ceased altogether. For the last half hour we were indebted solely to our oars for the little progress made, being exposed to all the glare of a burning sun ;



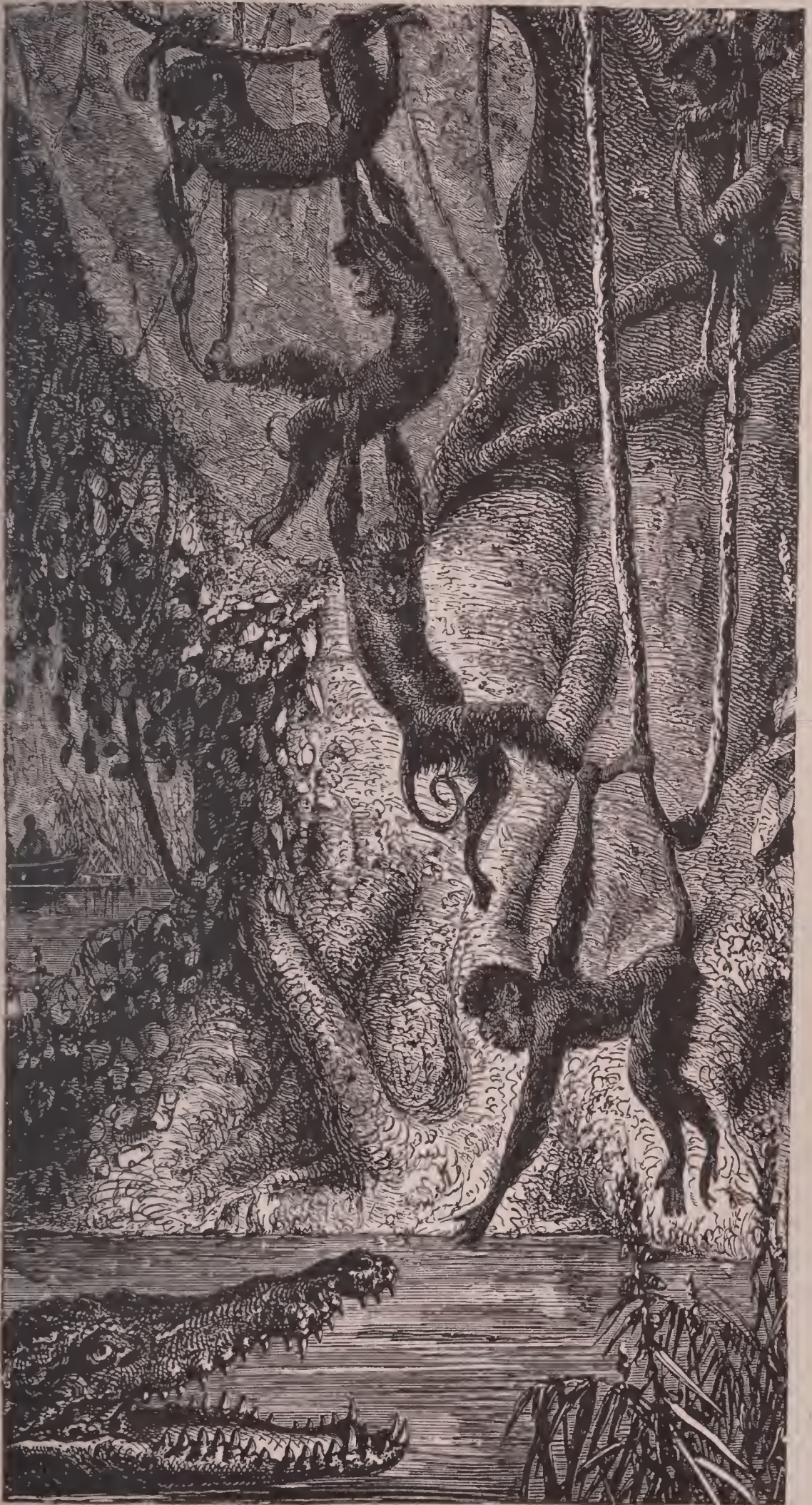
and the atmosphere was heavy and suffocating. All of a sudden, to my great astonishment, the water began to be agitated, and our light boat was tossed about by the waves. I knew not what to think, and was seriously alarmed, when our pilot called out, 'Look how the sea boils!' Turning in the direction indicated, I beheld the sea really in a state of ebullition, and very shortly afterwards an immense jet of water and steam, which lasted for several minutes, was thrown into the air. I had never before witnessed such a phenomenon, and was now no longer astonished at the powerful smell of sulphur which had nearly overpowered me in Ko-Man. It was really a submarine volcano, which burst out, more than a mile from the place where we had anchored three days before.

"On March 1st we reached Ven-Ven, at Paknam-Ven, the name of the place where the branches of the river unite. This river, whose width at the mouth is above three miles, is formed by the union of several streams flowing from the mountains, as well as by an auxiliary of the Chantaboun River, which, serving as a canal, unites these two places. Ascending the stream for fourteen or fifteen miles, a large village is reached, called Bandiana, but Paknam-Ven is only inhabited by five families of Chinese fishermen.

"Crocodiles are more numerous in the river at Paknam-Ven than in that at Chantaboun. I continually saw them throw themselves from the banks into the water: and it has frequently happened that careless fishers, or persons who have impru-

dently fallen asleep on the shore, have become their prey, or have afterwards died of the wounds inflicted by them. This latter has happened twice during my stay here. It is amusing, however—for one is interested in observing the habits of animals all over the world—to see the manner in which these creatures catch the apes, which sometimes take a fancy to play with them. Close to the bank lies the crocodile, his body in the water, and only his capacious mouth above the surface, ready to seize anything that may come within reach. A troop of apes catch sight of him, seem to consult together, approach little by little, and commence their frolics, by turns actors and spectators. One of the most active or most impudent jumps from branch to branch, till within a respectful distance of the crocodile, when, hanging by one claw, and with the dexterity peculiar to these animals, he advances and retires, now giving his enemy a blow with his paw, at another time only pretending to do so. The other apes, enjoying the fun, evidently wish to take a part in it ; but the other branches being too high, they form a sort of chain by laying hold of each other's paws, and thus swing backwards and forwards, while any one of them who comes within reach of the crocodile torments him to the best of his ability. Sometimes the terrible jaws suddenly close, but not upon the audacious ape, who just escapes ; then there are cries of exultation from the tormentors, who gambol about joyfully. Occasionally, however, the claw is entrapped, and the victim dragged with the rapidity of lightning beneath the water, when





MONKEYS PLAYING WITH A CROCODILE.





the whole troop disperse, groaning and shrieking. The misadventure does not, however, prevent their recommencing the game a few days afterwards.

“ On the 4th I returned to Chantaboun from my excursions in the gulf, and resumed charge of my collections, which, during my absence, I had left at the custom-house, and which, to my great satisfaction, had been taken good care of. The tide was low, and we could not go up to the town. The sea here is steadily receding from the coast, and, if some remedy be not found, in a few years the river will not be navigable even for boats. Already the junks have some trouble in reaching Chantaboun even at high water. The inhabitants were fishing for crabs and mussels on the sand-banks, close to the custom-house, the *employés* in which were occupied in the same pursuit. The chief official, who, probably hoping for some small present, had come out to meet me, heard me promise a supply of pins and needles to those who would bring me shells, and encouraged his men to look for them. In consequence, a large number were brought me, which, to obtain otherwise, would have cost much time and trouble.”

## CHAPTER XV.

### MOUHOT IN THE HILL-COUNTRY OF CHANTABOUN.

HERE I am," continues Mouhot, in his narrative, "once more installed in the house of a good old Chinese, a pepper-planter, whose hospitality I enjoyed on my first visit to the place, two months ago. His name is Ihié-How, but in Siamese he is called Apait, which means *uncle*. He is a widower, with two sons, the eldest eighteen, a good young man, lively, hard-working, brave, and persevering. He is already much attached to me, and is desirous of accompanying me to Cambodia. Born amidst the mountains, and naturally intelligent, there are none of the quadrupeds and few of the feathered tribes found in the district with whose habits he is not familiar. He fears neither tiger nor elephant. All this, added to his amiable disposition, made Phrai (that is his name) a real treasure to me.

"Apait has also two brothers who have become Catholics, and have settled at Chantaboun in order to be near a Christian place of worship. He himself has never had any desire to change his religion,



because, he says, if he did, he must forget his deceased parents, for whom he frequently offers sacrifices. He is badly off, having incurred a debt of fifty ticals, for which he has to pay ten as yearly interest, the rate in Siam being always twenty or thirty per cent. Besides this he has various taxes to pay—twelve ticals for his two sons, four for his house, one for his furnace, one for his pig. The tax on the pepper-field is eight ticals, one on his areca-trees, one on the betel cultivated by him, and two *sellungs* for a cocoa-tree; altogether thirty-nine ticals. His land brings him in forty after all expenses are paid; what can he do with the one remaining tical? The unlucky agriculturists of this kind, and they are many, live on vegetables, and on the rice which they obtain from the Siamese in exchange for areca.

“ On my return from the islands, I had been detained nearly ten days at Chantaboun, unable to walk; I had cut my heel in climbing the rocks on the shore at Ko-Man, and, as I was constantly bare-footed in the salt water, the wound soon closed. But afterwards I began to suffer from it; my foot swelled, and I was obliged to re-open the wound to extract a piece of shell which had remained in it. As soon as I could leave Chantaboun, I hired a carriage and two buffaloes to take me to the mountain. I experienced much gratification in finding myself again amongst these quiet scenes, at once so lovely and so full of grandeur. Here are valleys intersected by streams of pure and limpid water; there, small plains, over which are scattered the

modest dwellings of the laborious Chinese ; while, a little in the distance, rises the mountain, with its imposing rocks, its grand trees, its torrents and waterfalls.

“ We have already had some storms, for the rainy season is approaching, vegetation is fresh, and nature animated ; the song of birds and the hum of insects are heard all around. Apait has resigned to me his bed, if that can be so styled, which consists merely of a few laths of areca placed upon four stakes. I have extended my mat upon this framework, and should enjoy uninterrupted sleep all night were it not for the swarms of ants which frequently disturb me by passing over my body, getting under my clothes and into my beard, and, I almost fancy, would end by dragging me out, if I did not from time to time shake them off. Occasionally great spiders and other disgusting creatures, crawling about under the roof, would startle me by dropping suddenly on my face.

“ The heat now is quite endurable, the thermometer generally marking 80° Fahr. in the morning and 90° in the middle of the day. The water of the streams is so cool and refreshing, that a good morning and evening ablution makes me comfortable for several hours, as well as contributing to keep me in health.

“ Last evening Phrai, having gone along with my man Niou to Chantaboun to buy provisions, brought back to his father some Chinese bonbons, for which he had paid half a fuang. The poor old man was delighted with them, and this morning at daybreak

he dressed himself in his best clothes, on which I asked him what was going to happen. He immediately began to clean a plank which was fitted into the wall to serve as a sort of table or altar. Above this was a drawing of a man dancing and putting out his tongue, with claws on his feet and hands, and with the tail of an ape, intended to represent his father. He then filled three small cups with tea, put the bonbons in a fourth, and placed the whole upon the simple altar; finally, lighting two pieces of odoriferous wood, he began his devotions. It was a sacrifice to the manes of his parents, performed with the hope that their souls would come and taste the good things set before them.

“At the entrance of Apait’s garden, in front of his house, I had made a kind of shed with stakes and branches of trees, covered with a roof of leaves, where I dried and prepared my large specimens, such as the long-armed apes, kids, and horn-bills, as also my collections of insects. All this has attracted a crowd of inquisitive Siamese and China-men, who came to see the “farang” and admire his curiosities. We have just passed the Chinese New Year’s-day, and, as there has been a *fête* for three days, all those living at any distance have profited by the opportunity to visit us. At times Apait’s house and garden have been crowded with people in their holiday dresses, many of whom, seeing my instruments, my naturalist’s case, and different preparations, took me for a great doctor, and begged for medicines.

“Alas! my pretensions are not so high; however,



I treat them on the 'Raspail' system ; and a little box of pomade or phial of sedative water will perhaps be represented in some European museum by an insect or shell brought to me by these worthy people in return for the good I would gladly do them.

“ It is very agreeable, after a fatiguing day's chase over hills and amongst dense forests, through which one must cut one's way, axe in hand, to repose in the evening on the good Chinaman's bench in front of his house, shaded by bananas, cocoanut, and other trees. For the last four days a violent north wind, fresh in spite of the season, has been blowing without intermission, breaking asunder and tearing up by the roots some of the trees on the higher grounds. This is its farewell visit, for the southeast wind will now blow for many months.

“ This evening everything appeared to me more beautiful and agreeable than usual ; the stars shone brightly in the sky, the moon was clear. Sitting by Apait while his son played to me some Chinese airs on the bamboo flute, I thought to what a height of prosperity this province, even now one of the most interesting and flourishing in the country, might attain, were it wisely and intelligently governed, or if European colonists were to settle and develop its resources. Proximity to the sea, facility of communication, a rich soil, a healthy and propitious climate ; nothing is wanting to ensure success to an industrious and enterprising agriculturist.

“ The worthy old Apait has at last consented

to allow his son to enter my service, provided I pay him thirty ticals, half a year's wages, in advance. This will enable him, if he can sell his house and pepper-field, to clear off his debt and retire to another part of the mountain. Phrai is delighted to attend me, and to run about the woods all day, and I am not less pleased with our bargain, for his knowledge of the country, his activity, his intelligence, and attachment to me, are invaluable.

“The heat becomes greater and greater, the thermometer having risen to 102° Fahr. in the shade : thus hunting is now a painful, and sometimes impossible, exertion, anywhere except in the woods. A few days ago I took advantage of a short spell of cloudy, and consequently cooler weather, to visit a waterfall I had heard of in the almost desert district of Prion, twelve miles from Kombau. After reaching the last-named place, our course lay for about an hour and a half along a charming valley, nearly as smooth as a lawn, and as ornamental as a park. By and by, entering a forest, we kept by the banks of a stream, which, shut in between two mountains, and studded with blocks of granite, increases in size as you approach its source. Before long we arrived at the fall, which must be a fine spectacle in the rainy season. It then pours down from immense perpendicular rocks, forming, as it were, a circular peaked wall, nearly thirty metres in diameter, and twenty metres in height. The force of the torrent having been broken by the rocky bed into which it descends, there is another fall of ten feet; and lower down, after a third fall of fifteen feet, it

passes into an ample basin, which, like a mirror, reflects the trees and cliffs around. Even during the dry season, the spring, then running from beneath enormous blocks of granite, flows in such abundance as to feed several streams.

“ I was astonished to see my two servants, heated by their long walk, bathe in the cold water, and on my advising them to wait for a little, they replied that the natives were always accustomed to bathe when hot.

“ We all turned stone-cutters, that is to say, we set to work to detach the impression of an unknown animal, from the surface of an immense mass of granite rising up out of one of the mountain torrents. A Chinese had in January demanded so exorbitant a sum for this, that I had abandoned the idea, intending to content myself with an impression in wax, but Phrai proposed to me to undertake the work, and by our joint labor it was soon accomplished. The Siamese do not much like my meddling with their rocks, and their superstition is also somewhat startled when I happen to kill a white ape, although when the animal is dead and skinned they are glad to obtain a cutlet or steak from it, for they attribute to the flesh of this creature great medicinal virtues.

“ The rainy season is drawing near; storms become more and more frequent, and the growling of the thunder is frightful. Insects are in greater numbers, and the ants, which are now looking out for a shelter, invade the dwellings, and are a perfect pest to my collections, not to speak of myself



and my clothes. Several of my books and maps have been almost devoured in one night. Fortunately there are no mosquitoes, but to make up for this, there is a small species of leech, which, when it rains, quits the streams and infests the woods, rendering an excursion there, if not impracticable, at all events very disagreeable. You have constantly to be pulling them off you by dozens, but, as some always escape observation, you are sure to return home covered with blood; often my white trowsers are dyed as red as those of a French soldier.

“The animals have now become scarcer, which in different ways is a great disappointment to all, for Phrai and Niou feasted sumptuously on the flesh of the apes, and made a profit by selling their gall to the Chinese doctors in Chantaboun. Hornbills have also turned wild, so we can find nothing to replenish our larder but an occasional kid. Large stags feed on the mountain, but one requires to watch all night to get within range of them. There are not many birds to be seen, neither quails, partridges, nor pheasants; and the few wild fowl which occasionally make their appearance are so difficult to shoot that it is waste both of time and ammunition to make the attempt.

“In this part of the country the Siamese declare they cannot cultivate bananas on account of the elephants, which at certain times come down from the mountains and devour the leaves, of which they are very fond. The royal and other tigers abound here; every night they prowl about in the vicinity of the

houses, and in the mornings we can see the print of their large claws in the sand and in the clay near streams. By day they retire to the mountain, where they lurk in close and inaccessible thickets. Now and then you may get near enough to one to have a shot at him, but generally, unless suffering from hunger, they fly at the approach of man. A few days ago I saw a young Chinese who had nineteen wounds on his body, made by one of these animals; he was looking out from a tree about nine feet high, when the cries of a young kid, tied to another tree at a short distance, attracted a large tiger. The young man fired at it, but, though mortally wounded, the creature, collecting all his strength for a final spring, leaped on his enemy, seized him and pulled him down, tearing his flesh frightfully with teeth and claws as they rolled on the ground. Luckily for the unfortunate Chinese, it was a dying effort, and in a few moments more the tiger relaxed its hold and breathed its last.

“In the mountains of Chantaboun, and not far from my present abode, precious stones of fine water occur. There is even at the east of the town an eminence, which they call ‘the mountain of precious stones;’ and it would appear from the account of Mgr. Pallegoix that at one time they were abundant in that locality, since in about half an hour he picked up a handful, which is as much as now can be found in a twelvemonth, nor can they be purchased at any price.

“It seems that I have seriously offended the

poor Thai\* of Kombau by carrying away the footprints. I have met several natives who tell me they have broken arms, that they can no longer work, and will always henceforth be in poverty; and I find that I am considered to be answerable for this because I irritated the genius of the mountain. Henceforth they will have a good excuse for idleness.

“The Chinese have equally amused me. They imagine that some treasure ought to be found beneath the footprints, and that the block which I have carried away must possess great medicinal virtues; so Apait and his friends have been rubbing the under part of the stone every morning against another piece of granite, and, collecting carefully the dust that fell from it, have mixed it with water and drunk it fasting, fully persuaded that it is a remedy against all ills. Here they say that it is faith which cures; and it is certain that pills are often enough administered in the civilized West which have no more virtue than the granite powder swallowed by old Apait.

“His uncle Thié-ou has disposed of his property for him for sixty ticals, so that, after paying off his debts, he will have left, including the sum I gave him for his son's services, forty ticals. Here that is enough to make a man think himself rich to the end of his days; he can at times regale the souls of his parents with tea and bonbons, and live himself like a true country manda-

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\* The Siamese were formerly called Thai.



rin. Before leaving Kombau the old man secured me another lodging, for which I had to pay two ticals (six francs) a month, and I lost nothing in point of comfort by the change. For 'furnished apartments' I think the charge not unreasonable. The list of furniture is as follows: in the dining-room *nothing*, in the bedroom an old mat on a camp-bed. However, this house is cleaner and larger than the other, and better protected from the weather; in the first the water came in in all directions. Then the camp-bed, which is a large one, affords a pleasant lounge after my hunting expeditions. Besides which advantages, my new landlord furnishes me with bananas and vegetables, for which I pay in game when the chase has been successful.

"The fruit here is exquisite, particularly the mango, the mangosteen, the pine-apple, so fragrant and melting in the mouth, and, what is superior to anything I ever imagined or tasted, the famous 'durian' or 'dourion,' which justly merits the title of king of fruits. But to enjoy it thoroughly one must have time to overcome the disgust at first inspired by its smell, which is so strong that I could not stay in the same place with it. On first tasting it I thought it like the flesh of some animal in a state of putrefaction, but after four or five trials I found the aroma exquisite. The *durian* is about two thirds the size of a jacca, and like it is encased in a thick and prickly rind, which protects it from the teeth of squirrels and other nibblers; on opening it there are to be found ten

cells, each containing a kernel larger than a date, and surrounded by a sort of white, or sometimes yellowish cream, which is most delicious. By an odd freak of nature, not only is there the first repugnance to it to overcome, but if you eat it often, though with ever so great moderation, you find yourself next day covered with blotches, as if attacked with measles, so heating is its nature. A *durian* picked is never good, for when fully ripe it falls of itself; when cut open it must be eaten at once, as it quickly spoils, but otherwise it will keep for three days. At Bangkok one of them costs one *sel-lung*; at Chantaboun nine may be obtained for the same sum.

“I had come to the conclusion that there was little danger in traversing the woods here, and in our search for butterflies and other insects, we often took no other arms than a hatchet and hunting-knife, while Niou had become so confident as to go by night with Phrai to lie in wait for stags. Our sense of security was, however, rudely shaken when one evening a panther rushed upon one of the dogs close to my door. The poor animal uttered a heart-rending cry, which brought us all out, as well as our neighbors, each torch in hand. Finding themselves face to face with a panther, they in their turn raised their voices in loud screams; but it was too late for me to get my gun, for in a moment the beast was out of reach.

“In a few weeks I must say farewell to these beautiful mountains, never, in all probability, to see them again, and I think of this with regret; I have

been so happy here, and have so much enjoyed my hunting and my solitary walks in this comparatively temperate climate, after my sufferings from the heat and mosquitoes in my journey northwards.

“Thanks to my nearness to the sea on the one side, and to the mountain region on the other, the period of the greatest heat passed away without my perceiving it; and I was much surprised at receiving a few days ago a letter from Bangkok which stated that it had been hotter weather there than had been known for more than thirty years. Many of the European residents had been ill; yet I do not think the climate of Bangkok more unhealthy than that of other towns of eastern Asia within the tropics. But no doubt the want of exercise, which is there almost impossible, induces illness in many cases.

“A few days ago I made up my mind to penetrate into a grotto on Mount Sabab, half-way between Chantaboun and Kombau, so deep, I am told, that it extends to the top of the mountain. I set out, accompanied by Phrai and Niou, furnished with all that was necessary for our excursion. On reaching the grotto we lighted our torches, and, after scaling a number of blocks of granite, began our march. Thousands of bats, roused by the lights, commenced flying round and round us, flapping our faces with their wings, and extinguishing our torches every minute. Phrai walked first, trying the ground with a lance which he held; but we had scarcely proceeded a hundred paces when he threw himself back





SIAMESE ACTORS.





upon me with every mark of terror, crying out, "A serpent! go back!" as he spoke I perceived an enormous boa about fifteen feet off, with erect head and open mouth, ready to dart upon him. My gun being loaded, one barrel with two bullets, the other with shot, I took aim and fired off both at once. We were immediately enveloped in a thick cloud of smoke, and could see nothing, but prudently beat an instant retreat. We waited anxiously for some time at the entrance of the grotto, prepared to do battle with our enemy should he present himself; but he did not appear. My guide now boldly lighted a torch, and, furnished with my gun reloaded and a long rope, went in again alone. We held one end of the rope, that at the least signal we might fly to his assistance. For some minutes, which appeared terribly long, our anxiety was extreme, but equally great was our relief and gratification when we saw him approach, drawing after him the rope, to which was attached an immense boa. The head of the reptile had been shattered by my fire, and his death had been instantaneous, but we sought to penetrate no farther into the grotto.

"I had been told that the Siamese were about to celebrate a grand *fête* at a pagoda about three miles off, in honor of a superior priest who died last year, and whose remains were now to be burned according to the custom of the country. I went to see this singular ceremony, hoping to gain some information respecting the amusements of this people, and arrived at the place about eight in the morning, the time for breakfast, or 'kinkao,' (rice-



eating.) Nearly two thousand Siamese of both sexes from Chantaboun and the surrounding villages, some in carriages and some on foot, were scattered over the ground in the neighborhood of the pagoda. All wore new sashes and dresses of brilliant colors, and the effect of the various motley groups was most striking.

“ Under a vast roof of planks supported by columns, forming a kind of shed, bordered by pieces of stuff covered with grotesque paintings representing men and animals in the most extraordinary attitudes, was constructed an imitation rock of colored pasteboard, on which was placed a catafalque lavishly decorated with gilding and carved work, and containing an urn in which were the precious remains of the priest. Here and there were arranged pieces of paper and stuff in the form of flags. Outside the building was prepared the funeral pile, and at some distance off a platform was erected for the accommodation of a band of musicians, who played upon different instruments of the country. Farther away some women had established a market for the sale of fruit, bonbons, and arrack, while in another quarter some Chinaman and Siamese were performing, in a little theatre run up for the occasion, scenes something in the style of those exhibited by our strolling actors at fairs. This *fête*, which lasted for three days, had nothing at all in it of a funereal character. I had gone there hoping to witness something new and remarkable, for these peculiar rites are only celebrated in honor of sovereigns, nobles, and other

persons of high standing ; but I had omitted to take into consideration the likelihood of my being myself an object of curiosity to the crowd. Scarcely, however, had I appeared in the pagoda, followed by Phrai and Niou, when on all sides I heard the exclamation, 'Farang ! come and see the farang !' and immediately both Siamese and Chinamen left their bowls of rice and pressed about me. I hoped that, once their curiosity was gratified, they would leave me in peace, but instead of that the crowd grew thicker and thicker, and followed me wherever I went, so that at last it became almost unbearable, and all the more so as most of them were already drunk either with opium or arrack, many indeed, with both. I quitted the pagoda and was glad to get into the fresh air again, but the respite was of short duration. Passing the entrance of a large hut temporarily built of planks, I saw some chiefs of provinces sitting at breakfast. The senior of the party advanced straight towards me, shook me by the hand, and begged me in a cordial and polite manner to enter ; and I was glad to avail myself of his kind offer, and take refuge from the troublesome people. My hosts overwhelmed me with attentions, and forced upon me pastry, fruit, and bonbons ; but the crowd who had followed me forced their way into the building, and hemmed us in on all sides ; even the roof was covered with gazers. All of a sudden we heard the walls crack, and the whole of the back of the hut, yielding under the pressure, fell in, and people, priests, and chiefs tumbling one upon another, the scene of con-

fusion was irresistibly comic. I profited by the opportunity to escape, swearing—though rather late in the day—that they should not catch me again.

“ I know not to what it is to be attributed, unless it be the pure air of the mountains and a more active life, but the mountaineers of Chantaboun appear a much finer race than the Siamese of the plain, more robust, and of a darker complexion. Their features, also, are more regular, and I should imagine that they sprang rather from the Arian than from the Mongolian race. They remind me of the Siamese and Laotians whom I met with in the mountains of Pakpriaou.

“ Will the present movement of the nations of Europe towards the East result in good by introducing into these lands the blessings of our civilization? or shall we, as blind instruments of boundless ambition, come hither as a scourge to add to their present miseries? Here are millions of unhappy creatures in great poverty in the midst of the richest and most fertile region imaginable, bowing shamefully under a servile yoke, made viler by despotism and the most barbarous customs, living and dying in utter ignorance of the only true God!

“ I quitted with regret these beautiful mountains, where I had passed so many happy hours with the poor but hospitable inhabitants. On the evening before and the morning of my departure, all the people of the neighborhood, Chinese and Siamese, came to say adieu, and offer me presents of fruits, dried fish, fowls, tobacco, and rice



cooked in various ways with brown sugar, all in greater quantities than I could possibly carry away. The farewells of these good mountaineers were touching ; they kissed my hands and feet, and I confess that my eyes were not dry. They accompanied me to a great distance, begging me not to forget them, and to pay them another visit."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### PECHABURI OR P'RIPP'REE.

ON the opposite side of the gulf from Chantaboun, and much nearer to the mouth of the Meinam, within a few hours' sail of Paknam, is the town of Pechaburi, which is now famous as the seat of a summer palace built by the late king, and as a place of increasing resort for foreigners resident in Siam.

The proper orthography of the name of this town was a matter which gave the late king a great deal of solicitude and distress. Priding himself upon his scholarship almost as much as on his sovereignty, his pedantic soul was vexed by the method in which some of the writers for the press had given the name. Accordingly, in a long article published in the Bangkok Calendar, he relieved his mind by a protest which is so characteristic and in its way so amusing, that it will bear to be quoted by way of introduction to the present chapter. He has just finished a long disquisition, philological, historical and antiquarian, concerning the name of the city of Bangkok ; and he continues as follows :

VIEW OF THE MOUNTAINS OF PECHABURI.







“ But as the city P’etch’ără-booree the masses of the people in all parts call it P’ripp’ree or P’et-p’ree. The name P’etch’ără-booree is Sanskrit, a royal name given to the place the same as T’on-booree, Non-booree, Nāk’awn K’u’n k’ăn, Sămöötä-pra-kan, and Ch’ă-chong-sow. Now if Mahá nāk’awn be called Bangkok, and the other names respectively called Tălăt-k’wan, Paklat, Paknam, and Păätrew, it is proper that P’etch’ără-booree should follow suit, and be called by her vulgar name P’rip-p’ree, or P’et-p’ree.

“ Now that the company of teachers and printers should coin a name purporting to be after the royal style and yet do not take the true Sanskrit, seems not at all proper. In trying to Romanize the name P’etch’ără-booree, they place the mark over the *a* thus P’etchă-booree, making foreigners read it P’etcha-booree, following the utterances of old dunces in the temples, who boast that they know Balăm Bali, and not satisfied with that, they even call the place City P’et, setting forth both the Bali and the meaning of the word; and thus boasting greatly of their knowledge and of being a standard of orthography for the name of that city.

“ Now what is the necessity of coining another name like this? There is no occasion for it. When the name is thus incorrectly printed, persons truly acquainted with Sanskrit and Bali (for such there are many other places) will say that those who write or print the name in the way, must be pupils of ignorant teachers—blind teachers not following the real Sanskrit in full, taking only the

utterances of woodsmen, and holding them forth [as the correct way.] In following such sounds they cannot be in accord with the Sanskrit, and they conclude that the name is Siamese. Whereas, in truth, it is not Siamese. The true Siamese name is P'rip-p'ree or P'et-p'ree. It matters not what letters are used to express it—follow your own mind ; but let the sound come out clear and accurate either P'rip-p'ree or P'et-p'ree, and it will be true Siamese. But the mode of writing and printing the name P'etchă-booree with the letter *a* and mark over it and other marks in two places, resists the eye and the mouth greatly. Whatever be done in this matter let there be uniformity. If it be determined to follow the vulgar mode of calling the name, let that be followed out fully and accurately ; but if the royal mode be preferred, let the king be sought unto for the proper way of writing it, which shall be in full accordance with the Sanskrit. And should this happen not to be like the utterance of the people in the temples, the difference cannot be great. And persons unacquainted with Sanskrit will be constrained to acknowledge that you do really know Sanskrit ; and comparing the corrected with the improper mode of Romanizing, will praise you for the improvement which you have made. Such persons there are a few, not ignorant and blind leaders and dunces like the inmates of the temples and of the jungles and forests, but learned in the Sanskrit and residents in Siam."

It is to be feared, however, that his majesty's



protest came too late, and that, like many another blunder, the name Pechaburi has obtained such currency that it cannot be superseded.

Sir John Bowring, "received from a gentleman now resident in Siam the notes of an excursion to this city in July, 1855.

" " We left Bangkok about three in the afternoon, and although we had the tide in our favor, we only accomplished five miles during the first three hours. Our way lay through a creek ; and so great was the number of boats that it strongly reminded me of Cheapside during the busiest part of the day. Although I had been in Bangkok four months, I had not the least conception that there was such a population spread along the creeks. More than four miles from the river, there appeared to be little or no diminution in the number of the inhabitants, and the traffic was as great as at the mouth of the creek.

" " Having at last got past the crowd of boats, we advanced rapidly for two hours more, when we stopped at a *wat*, in order to give the men a rest. This *wat*, as its name " Laos " implies, was built by the inhabitants of the Laos country, and is remarkable (if we can trust to tradition) as being the limit of the Birmanese invasion. Here, the Siamese say, a body of Birmans were defeated by the villagers, who had taken refuge in the *wat* : and they point out two large holes in the wall as the places where cannon-balls struck. After leaving this, we proceeded rapidly until about 12 P.M., when we reached the other branch of the Meinam

(Meinam mahachen,) and there we halted for the night.

“ ‘ Our journey the next day was most delightful ; most of it lay through narrow creeks, their banks covered with atap and bamboo, whilst behind this screen were plantations of chilis, beans, peas, etc. Alligators and otters abounded in the creeks ; and we shot several, and one of a peculiar breed of monkey also we killed. The Siamese name of it is *chang*, and it is accounted a great delicacy : they also eat with avidity the otter. We crossed during the day the Tha-chin, a river as broad as the Meinam at Bangkok. Towards evening we entered the Mei-Klong, which we descended till we reached the sea-coast. Here we waited till the breeze should sufficiently abate to enable us to cross the bay.

“ ‘ 11th.—We started about 4 A.M., and reached the opposite side in about three hours. The bay is remarkably picturesque, and is so shallow, that, although we crossed fully four miles from the head of the bay, we never had more than six feet of water, and generally much less. Arrived at the other side, we ascended the river on which Pechaburi is built. At the mouth of the river, myriads of monkeys were to be seen. A very amusing incident occurred here. Mr. Hunter, wishing to get a juvenile specimen, fired at the mother, but, unfortunately, only wounded her, and she had strength enough to carry the young one into the jungle. Five men immediately followed her ; but ere they had been out of sight five minutes, we saw them hurrying

toward us shouting, “ *Ling, ling, ling, ling !*” (*ling*, monkey.) As I could see nothing, I asked Mr. Hunter if they were after the monkey. “ Oh, no,” he replied ; “ the monkeys are after them !” And so they were—thousands upon thousands of them, coming down in a most unpleasant manner ; and, as the tide was out, there was a great quantity of soft mud to cross before they could reach the boat, and here the monkeys gained very rapidly upon the men, and when at length the boat was reached, their savage pursuers were not twenty yards behind. The whole scene was ludicrous in the extreme, and I really think, if my life had depended upon it, that I could not have fired a shot. To see the men making the most strenuous exertions to get through the deep mud, breathless with their run and fright combined ; and the army of little wretches drawn up in line within twenty yards of us, screaming, and making use of the most diabolical language, if we could only have understood them ! Besides, there was a feeling that they had the right side of the question. One of the *refugees*, however, did not appear to take my view of the case : smarting under the disgrace, and the bamboos against which he ran in his retreat, he seized my gun, and fired both barrels on the exulting foe ; they immediately retired in great disorder, leaving four dead upon the field. Many were the quarrels that arose from this affair among the men.

“ ‘ The approach to Pechaburi is very pleasant, the river is absolutely arched over by tamarind



trees, whilst the most admirable cultivation prevails all along its course.

“ ‘ The first object which attracts the attention is the magnificent pagoda, within which is a reclining figure of Buddha, one hundred and forty-five feet in length. Above the pagoda, the priests have, with great perseverance, terraced the face of the rock to a considerable height. About half-way up the mountain, there is an extensive cave, generally known amongst foreigners as the “ Cave of Idols ; ” it certainly deserves its name, if we are to judge from the number of figures of Buddha which it contains.

“ ‘ The talapoins assert that it is natural. It may be so in part, but there are portions of it in which the hand of man is visible : it is very small, not more than thirty yards in length, and about seven feet high ; but anything like a cavern is so uncommon in this country, that this one is worth notice. We now proceeded to climb the mountain : it is very steep, but of no great height—probably not more than five hundred feet ; it is covered with huge blocks of a stone resembling granite : these are exceedingly slippery, and the ascent is thus rendered rather laborious. But when we reached the top, we were well repaid. The country for miles in each direction lay at our feet—one vast plain, unbroken by any elevation ; it appeared like an immense garden, so carefully was it cultivated ; the young rice and sugar-cane, of the most beautiful green, relieved by the darker shade of the cocoa-nut trees, which are used as boundaries to the

fields—those fields traversed by suitable footpaths. Then towards the sea the view was more varied : rice and sugar-cane held undisputed sway for a short distance from the town ; then cocoa-nuts became more frequent, until the rice finally disappeared ; then the bamboos gradually invaded the cocoa-nut trees ; then the atap palm, with its magnificent leaf ; and, lastly, came that great invader of Siam, the mangrove. Beyond were the mountains on the Malay Peninsula, stretching away in the distance.

“ ‘ With great reluctance did we descend from the little pagoda, which is built upon the very summit ; but evening was coming on, and we had observed in ascending some very suspicious-looking footprints mightily resembling those of a tiger.

“ ‘ Pechaburi is a thriving town, containing about twenty thousand inhabitants. The houses are, for the most part, neatly built, and no floating houses are visible. Rice and sugar are two thirds dearer at Bangkok than they are here ; and the rice is of a particularly fine description. We called upon the governor during the evening. Next morning we started for home, and arrived without any accident.’ ”

It was not until the completion of his prolonged tour of exploration through Cambodia, and his visit to the savage tribes on the frontier of Cochin China, that Mouhot found time for his excursion to Pechaburi from Bangkok.

“ I returned to the capital,” he says, “ after fifteen months’ absence. During the greater part of

this time I had never known the comfort of sleeping in a bed; and throughout my wanderings my only food had been rice or dried fish, and I had not once tasted good water. I was astonished at having preserved my health so well, particularly in the forests, where, often wet to the skin, and without a change of clothes, I have had to pass whole nights by a fire, at the foot of a tree; yet I have not had a single attack of fever, and been always happy and in good spirits, especially when lucky enough to light upon some novelty. A new shell or insect filled me with a joy which ardent naturalists alone can understand; but they know well how little fatigues and privations of all kinds are cared for when set against the delight experienced in making one discovery after another, and in feeling that one is of some slight assistance to the votaries of science. It pleases me to think that my investigations into the archæology, entomology, and conchology of these lands may be of use to certain members of the great and generous English nation, who kindly encouraged the poor naturalist; whilst France, his own country, remained deaf to his voice.

“It was another great pleasure to me, after these fifteen months of travelling, during which very few letters from home had reached me, to find, on arriving at Bangkok, an enormous packet, telling me all the news of my distant family and country. It is indeed happiness, after so long a period of solitude, to read the lines traced by the beloved hands of an aged father, of a wife, of a brother. These joys



are to be reckoned among the sweetest and purest of life.

“ We stopped in the centre of the town, at the entrance of a canal, whence there is a view over the busiest part of the Meinam. It was almost night, and silence reigned around us; but when at day-break I rose and saw the ships lying at anchor in the middle of the stream, while the roofs of the palaces and pagodas reflected the first rays of the sun, I thought that Bangkok had never looked so beautiful. However, life here would never suit me, and the mode of locomotion is wearisome after an active existence among the woods and in the chase.

“ The river is constantly covered with thousands of boats of different sizes and forms, and the port of Bangkok is certainly one of the finest in the world, without excepting even the justly-renowned harbor of New York. Thousands of vessels can find safe anchorage here.

“ The town of Bangkok increases in population and extent every day, and there is no doubt but that it will become a very important capital; if France succeeds in taking possession of Annam, the commerce between the two countries will increase. It is scarcely a century old, and yet contains nearly half a million of inhabitants, amongst whom are many Christians. The flag of France floating in Cochin China would improve the position of the missions in all the surrounding countries; and I have reason to hope that Christianity will increase more rapidly than it has hitherto done.

“ I had intended to visit the northeast of the

country of Laos, crossing Dong Phya Phai, (the forest of the King of Fire,) and going on to Hieng Naie, on the frontiers of Cochin China; thence to the confines of Tonquin. I had planned to return afterwards by the Mékong to Cambodia, and then to pass through Cochin China, should the arms of France have been victorious there. However, the rainy season having commenced, the whole country was inundated, and the forests impassable; so it was necessary to wait four months before I could put my project in execution. I therefore packed up and sent off all my collections, and after remaining a few weeks in Bangkok I departed for Pechaburi, situated about 13° north lat., and to the north of the Malay-an peninsula.

“ On the 8th May, at five o'clock in the evening, I sailed from Bangkok in a magnificent vessel, ornamented with rich gilding and carved work, belonging to Khrom Luang, one of the king's brothers, who had kindly lent it to a valued friend of mine. There is no reason for concealing the name of this gentleman, who has proved himself a real friend in the truest meaning of the word; but I rather embrace the opportunity of testifying my affection and gratitude to M. Malherbes, who is a French merchant settled at Bangkok. He insisted on accompanying me for some distance, and the few days he passed with me were most agreeable ones.

“ The current was favorable, and, with our fifteen rowers, we proceeded rapidly up the stream. Our boat, adorned with all sorts of flags, red streamers, and peacocks' tails, attracted the attention of all the



PORTRAIT OF PRINCE KIHROM LUANG.





European residents, whose houses are built along the banks of the stream, and who, from their verandahs, saluted us by cheering and waving their hands. Three days after leaving Bangkok we arrived at Pechaburi.

“The king was expected there the same day, to visit a palace which he has had built on the summit of a hill near the town. Khrom Luang, Kalahom, (prime minister,) and a large number of mandarins had already assembled. Seeing us arrive, the prince called to us from his pretty little house ; and as soon as we had put on more suitable dresses we waited on him, and he entered into conversation with us till breakfast-time. He is an excellent man, and, of all the dignitaries of the country, the one who manifests least reserve and hauteur towards Europeans. In education, both this prince and the king are much advanced, considering the state of the country ; but in their manners they have little more refinement than the people generally.

“Our first walk was to the hill on which the palace stands. Seen from a little distance, this building, of European construction, presents a very striking appearance ; and the winding path which leads up to it has been admirably contrived amidst the volcanic rocks, basalt, and scoria which cover the surface of this ancient crater.

“About twenty-five miles off, stretches from north to south a chain of mountains called Deng, and inhabited by the independent tribes of the primitive Kariens. Beyond these rise a number of still higher peaks. On the low ground are forests, palm-trees,

and rice-fields, the whole rich and varied in color. Lastly, to the south and east, and beyond another plain, lies the gulf, on whose waters, fading away into the horizon, a few scattered sails are just distinguishable.

“It was one of those sights not to be soon forgotten, and the king has evinced his taste in the selection of such a spot for his palace. No beings can be less poetical or imaginative than the Indo-Chinese; their hearts never appear to expand to the genial rays of the sun; yet they must have some appreciation of this beautiful scenery, as they always fix upon the finest sites for their pagodas and palaces.

“Quitting this hill, we proceeded to another, like it an extinct volcano or upheaved crater. Here are four or five grottoes, two of which are of surprising extent, and extremely picturesque. A painting which represented them faithfully would be supposed the offspring of a fertile imagination; no one would believe it to be natural. The rocks, long in a state of fusion, have taken, in cooling, those singular forms peculiar to scoria and basalt. Then, after the sea had retreated—for all these rocks have risen from the bottom of the water—owing to the moisture continually dripping through the damp soil, they have taken the richest and most harmonious colors. These grottoes, moreover, are adorned by such splendid stalactites, which, like columns, seem to sustain the walls and roofs, that one might fancy one’s self present at



one of the beautiful fairy scenes represented at Christmas in the London theatres.

“ If the taste of the architect of the king’s palace has failed in the design of its interior, here, at least, he has made the best of all the advantages offered to him by nature. A hammer touching the walls would have disfigured them ; he had only to level the ground, and to make staircases to aid the descent into the grottoes, and enable the visitor to see them in all their beauty.

“ The largest and most picturesque of the caverns has been made into a temple. All along the sides are rows of idols, one of superior size, representing Buddha asleep, being gilt.

“ We came down from the mountain just at the moment of the king’s arrival. Although his stay was not intended to exceed two days, he was preceded by a hundred slaves, carrying an immense number of coffers, boxes, baskets, etc. A disorderly troop of soldiers marched both in front and behind, dressed in the most singular and ridiculous costumes imaginable. The emperor Soulouque himself would have laughed, for certainly his old guard must have made a better appearance than that of his East Indian brother. Nothing could give a better idea of this set of tatterdemalions than the dressed-up monkeys which dance upon the organs of the little Savoyards. Their apparel was of coarse red cloth upper garments, which left a part of the body exposed, in every case either too large or too small, too long or too short, with white shakos, and

pantaloon of various colors; as for shoes, they were a luxury enjoyed by few.

“ A few chiefs, whose appearance was quite in keeping with that of their men, were on horseback, leading this band of warriors, whilst the king, attended by slaves, slowly advanced in a little open carriage drawn by a pony.

“ I visited several hills detached from the great chain Khao Deng, which is only a few miles off. During my stay here it has rained continually, and I have had to wage war with savage foes, from whom I never before suffered so much. Nothing avails against them; they let themselves be massacred with a courage worthy of nobler beings. I speak of mosquitoes. Thousands of these cruel insects suck our blood night and day. My body, face and hands are covered with wounds and blisters. I would rather have to deal with the wild beasts of the forest. At times I howl with pain and exasperation. No one can imagine the frightful plague of these little demons, to whom Dante has omitted to assign a place in his infernal regions. I scarcely dare to bathe, for my body is covered before I can get into the water. The natural philosopher who held up these little animals as examples of parental love was certainly not tormented as I have been.

“ About ten miles from Pechaburi I found several villages inhabited by Laotians, who have been settled there for two or three generations. Their costume consists of a long shirt and black pantaloons, like those of the Cochin-Chinese, and they

have the Siamese tuft of hair. The women wear the same head-dress as the Cambodians. Their songs, and their way of drinking through bamboo pipes, from large jars, a fermented liquor made from rice and herbs, recalled to my mind what I had seen among the savage Stiêns. I also found among them the same baskets and instruments used by those tribes.

“The young girls are fair compared to the Siamese, and their features are pretty; but they soon grow coarse, and lose all their charms. Isolated in their villages, these Laotians have preserved their language and customs, and they never mingle with the Siamese.”

To any one who has had experience of the Siamese mosquitoes, it is delightful to find such thorough appreciation of them as Mouhot exhibits. In number and in ferocity they are unsurpassed. A prolonged and varied observation of the habits of this insect, in New Jersey and elsewhere, enables this editor to say that the mosquitoes of Siam are easily chief among their kind. The memory of one night at Paknam is still vivid and dreadful. So multitudinous, so irresistible, so intolerable were the swarms of these sanguinary enemies that not only comfort, but health and even life itself seemed jeopardized, as the irritation was fast bringing on a state of fever. There seemed no way but to flee. Orders were given to get up steam in the little steamer which had brought us from Bangkok, and we made all possible haste out of reach of the



shore, and anchored miles distant in the safe waters of the gulf till morning.

Mouhot remained for four months among the mountains of Pechaburi, "known by the names of Makaon Khao, Panam Knot, Khao Tamoune, and Khao Samroun, the last two of which are 1,700 and 1,900 feet above the level of the sea." He needed the repose after the fatigue of his long journey, and by way of preparation for his new and arduous explorations of the Laos country, from which, as the result proved, he was never to come back. He returned to Bangkok, and after a brief season of preparation and farewell, he started for the interior.

## CHAPTER XVII.

FROM BANGKOK TO BIRMAH—DR. COLLINS'S JOURNEY.

OF the country to the west and northwest of Bangkok there is but little known. One has not to go far from the banks of the Meinam before coming in sight of the range of lofty mountains which divide the water-shed of the Gulf of Siam from that of the Bay of Bengal. The Meinam, as has been said, divides its waters through various parallel channels, and discharges them into the sea by separate mouths. Moreover, the Me-Klong, (which has sometimes, but erroneously, been called a branch of the Meinam,) runs almost parallel with it from the mountains of the Karen country to the gulf. On this river, even at a distance of sixty miles from the sea, there is so strong an ebb and flow of the tide that large vessels are often left aground by it.

“The capital of the province of Me-Klong,” says Bowring, “bears the name of the river. It was visited by Pallegoix, who speaks of it as a populous and beautiful city, with its floating bazaars, fine pagodas and gardens, and a population of ten

thousand, the largest proportion of which are Chinese. There is a considerable fortification for the defence of the place. The soil is remarkably fertile, and the salt-pits produce enough to supply the whole kingdom. Both sides of the river are peopled and cultivated. One place is called the village of the Twenty Thousand Palms, from the quantities of that noble tree which are found in the locality.

“ Of the Me-Klong canal and river Dr. Dean gives the following account : ‘ On Monday morning we went to the mouth of the Ta-Chin River, a couple of miles below the town, where our boatmen cast their net for fish. It was past midday on Monday, when, the tide favoring, we passed up the Ta-Chin River, some three or four miles from its mouth, when we entered the Me-Klong Canal, which connects the Ta-Chin with the Me-Klong River. We reached the town of Me-Klong, at the opposite terminus of the canal, at half-past nine o’clock the next morning, having stopped an hour and a half where the tides meet, at a place called Ma-Hou (dog-howl.)

“ ‘ At Me-Klong we took breakfast in our boat, while anchored in front of a wat or temple. These wats are the only hotels as well as the only school-houses and colleges in the country. Here travellers find a shelter in the open sheds in front of the temples ; but every traveller in this country is supposed to carry with him his bread and provisions, and cooking materials. This town has a population of ten or twelve thousand Siamese ; but a



short distance above, on the Me-Klong River, are villages of Chinese, with their floating houses and well-filled shops. Me-Klong is the native place of the Siamese twins, whose parents are now dead. Some of the family still reside at this place, whose chief interest about their absent brothers is that they should send home some money for their poor relations. But if, as is reported, they were sold for money, and sent away by their friends into a foreign country, they may not be under very great obligations to remit money to those who sold them.

“ ‘ At six o’clock, P.M., on Tuesday, we entered the canal from the Me-Klong River, which leads to the gardens of Bangchang ; and at nine o’clock the same evening reached the mission-house, now occupied by Chek-Suan. On calling to him from the boat, he replied that he was “ reading for evening worship, but had not prayed.” When he had done praying, he came to the boat to receive us. Bangchang is an extensive plain of the richest soil, in many parts highly cultivated as gardens.’ ”

Siam is not the only country in regard to which geographical science is under deep obligations to the explorations of Christian missionaries. And we owe to Dr. Collins, one of the American Presbyterian missionaries, the following narrative of his adventurous and successful journey through the unknown region which separates the valley of the Meinam and the Me-Klong from the waters of the Bay of Bengal.

“ Bangkok, the modern capital of Siam, is situated on the river Meinam, a few miles from its

mouth, and is usually reached by travellers by a semi-monthly steamer from Singapore. It is the centre of the American Baptist, Presbyterian, and Congregational missions in Siam ; and though reported not more than two or three hundred miles from the great Birinese missions at Maulmain and Rangoon, there is no intercourse except *via* Singapore. My destination being Rangoon, and wishing to avoid doubling the peninsula of Malacca, and to investigate a probable route for missionary and other operations, I resolved to go overland through the wilderness to Maulmain.

“ Providing myself with an order from the prime minister of Siam, by which I was to obtain elephants at Kanburee, I left Bangkok in company with my wife, in a small four-oared house boat, on the 18th of December, 1867. My wife being not only the first white lady, but almost the first white person to attempt this comparatively unknown route, a great deal of anxiety was expressed on the part of missionary friends ; so that there followed us the prayers and best wishes of all, as, without a knowledge of the language, we cut loose from civilization, and plunged into the wilderness. Siam, like parts of China, possesses a vast system of water communication, so that most parts of the level country may be reached by boats. Availing ourselves of this advantage, the first day our course was westerly through canals running parallel with, and a few miles from the Gulf of Siam, to near the mouth of the Me-Klong River. Proceeding up this river, we reached Kanburee, the chief town in

northwestern Siam, in fifty-six hours from Bangkok ; making the distance by water, at the rate of four miles per hour, two hundred and twenty-four miles. The Me-Klong River to Kanburee is an exceedingly winding, broad, clear, shallow stream, with a slow current, and well-defined banks, on which are a few villages and many separated habitations. The best land seemed to be in the hands of Chinese, who cultivate tobacco, sugar-cane, cotton, and rice. Many of the Chinese, located on the banks of this river, as in other parts of Siam, have married native women, and form the best element of the population. Quite a number are Roman Catholics ; while all are sober, industrious, orderly and prosperous.

“ On arriving at Kanburee, we presented the prime minister’s letter. The governor received us in his best style, surrounded by almost the entire population, who had come to gaze at the strangers. In order to gather the governor’s reply to our letter, we had to resort to the following expedient. There happened to be in the crowd a Cochin Chinese, who understood something of the Canton dialect. We addressed him in this dialect ; he translated our questions into Birmeese ; and a Birmeese present translated the words into Siamese, for the governor. We learned from the governor that he had no elephants at Kanburee, and that we must proceed four days’ journey, by boat, up the west branch of the Me-Klong, called the *Me-Klong Nee*, to obtain them. After an inexcusable delay of three days, the governor gave us a letter and an escort to the first head-



man in the forests, up the river, when we started for the elephants.

“Before getting under way, however, we had some difficulty in persuading our four boatmen to go further, as, per agreement, Kanburee was their destination—besides, the river now began to abound in rapids, which required hard rowing, poling, and wading, to pass, with an almost unknown wilderness all around. After working for twenty-five hours, we reached the hut of the first headman. On presenting the governor’s letter, the man labored over it for an hour, and then handed it back to me in despair. Here was an unlooked-for dilemma. Fortunately, a young Siamese arrived during the afternoon, and deciphered the document. The headman, on learning the governor’s pleasure, declared by signs, and the words, ‘chang mai-me,’ that he had ‘no elephants,’ but that they were to be found further up stream. After fifteen hours of hard rowing and poling, (the headman and his son accompanying us,) we reached the hut of the second headman. Here we were made to understand that the elephants were out in the jungle, and would be driven in and made ready for us as soon as possible. Dismissing our boat and boatmen, we took up our quarters in one corner of a bamboo hut, perched on the edge of the high bank overlooking the stream. We could not walk one hundred yards without entering the solemn forests, which stretched away, hundreds of miles, over mountains and valleys. After four days of waiting, the long looked for quadrupeds arrived. The elephants in this part of Siam belong chiefly to the

Karens, a migratory race, who change every few seasons from one to another of the rich mountain valleys. From the fact that they occupy Siamese territory, they are bound to furnish food, elephants, and guides to any who can bear an order from the prime minister of Siam.

“Our first half hour of elephant riding was of such a trying character that all after experiences failed to awaken fear or wonder. The Siamese huts, like those of the Karens, from which we first mounted the elephants, were elevated some ten feet from the ground, and reached by a ladder. When ready to start, all we had to do was to step from the floor of the hut on to the elephant’s head, and then into the howdah. This chair or saddle rested on the elephant’s back, and was held in position by a crupper under the tail, and a rattan girth around the neck of the animal. From our hut to the river’s brink was a distance of fifty feet, down a rugged and steep bank, at an incline of at least forty-five degrees. Down this, through the tall grass and bamboos, our elephants made their way, sometimes sliding on their haunches, and then bracing, or feeling their way by their trunks. Into the soft ooze of the river they plunged, and waded through water so deep that nothing but the howdahs and the elephant’s heads and trunks appeared above the surface. Then, up the opposite bank, equally steep, they climbed with slow but certain steps, until we reached the level land and the jungle path. After twenty-two hours on the elephants, (the time divided over several days,) we reached Chei-Yoke, the usual point on the

Me-Klong Nee, where native travellers start, through the jungle, for Tavoy. Remaining four days at Chei-Yoke, we procured fresh elephants, and after fifty-seven hours' ride, passing in sight of the three pagodas, reached a small Siamese town on the Me-Klong Nee, called Cass su-an. Here, after a few hours' delay, (failing to procure elephants,) we took canoes, some five miles up the river, to Bang suan, a Karen village, and the last in Siam.

“It will be noticed that the Me-Klong Nee is navigable up to this Karen mountain village; but we did not know this fact when leaving Bangkok, or we should have come by boat direct to this place. Indeed, at Bangkok there seemed to be no definite knowledge as to the route to Maulmain, except that about fifteen days were necessary to accomplish the journey.

“At Bang suan we met a company of Buddhist priests on their way to Siam, who told us, by signs, that they had walked from Maulmain to that village through the forests, in two days. At Bang suan they were now constructing bamboo rafts on which to float down to Kanburee. These rafts are formed of seven large bamboos, cut fifteen feet long, and placed side by side, and firmly bound together.

“Each raft will easily bear one person, and draw not more than three or four inches of water. After descending the principal rapids, the several rafts are united and roofed, so that the balance of the voyage is made with comfort and safety.

“Obtaining fresh elephants at Bang suan, we reached the boundary line of Siam in nine hours—





SIAMESE WOMEN.





the point being marked by three large piles of stones. Here we were at last, almost in sight of the bay of Bengal, on the water-shed of the Chang Mountains, a range that sweeps northward, from the extremity of the Malayan peninsula, until it joins those separating India from the Celestial Empire. From the plain of Siam to this point the ascent was gradual, with valleys, table-lands, hills, and isolated mountains, covered almost everywhere with canebrakes, or grand old forests of precious wood. The descent on the Birnese side, however, was more rapid, so that in six hours from the boundary we reached the first Karen village on the headwaters of the Ataran. Failing to obtain elephants at this village, we left the next day in canoes, and, after fifty-six hours of rowing and shooting down rapids, reached Maulmain, having thoroughly 'seen the elephant,' and enjoyed enough of boat and jungle life. The whole journey consumed forty-three days—most of them days of delay, vexation, and slow travelling; but now that they are over, I will not stop to recount our dangers and troubles, but simply indicate, after a few general statements, the best way, in the light of experience, of making the journey from Bangkok to Maulmain.

“ Our trip occupied two hundred and forty-eight hours of locomotion—ninety-four on elephants, and one hundred and fifty-four in boats. Allowing for the elephants two, and for the boats three miles per hour, we travelled about six hundred and fifty miles, though the distance, in a direct line, cannot be much more than one third as far. The Me-Klong, the



Me-Klong Nee, and the Ataran Rivers, we found to be exceedingly winding, but our general course, by compass, was northwest. The elephant paths through the forests were likewise very winding, but their usual course was north-northwest. The Me-Klong Nee and Ataran Rivers abounded in rapids, between which were long stretches of comparatively still waters, resembling mountain lakes. The shores were everywhere covered with a gorgeous vegetation of flowering trees, varieties of bamboo, and climbing vines. The rapids were usually only a few hundred feet in length, and never very dangerous, though the water sometimes flowed with great velocity. With the exception of a few Birmese on their way to Bangkok, and an occasional fisherman casting his net, we saw no signs of human life. Except the murmur of the distant rapids, a sweet and solemn stillness pervaded these mountain lakes, whose waters, filled with fish and clear as crystal, reflected the hues of the forest and sky, and were cooled by the shadows of the great mountains. Whenever we stopped for the night, or for our midday luncheon, and cast our bread upon the waters, thousands of the finny tribe were ready to devour it, while in all directions one could hear the loud splash of the large fish seizing their prey. The Me-Klong Nee would satisfy the most ardent disciple of Isaac Walton.

“The scenery on the rivers was always beautiful, and sometimes grand; but in the forests we could seldom see over a few hundred feet in any direction. The forest paths, at all visible, were usually beneath

everspreading bamboos, and pleasantly shaded. The days were rather warm, but the nights, in the mountains, quite cold, with very heavy dews. We saw very few signs of animal life in the forests ; generally, a profound silence reigned, broken only by the wild songs of the Karens, or the cracking of bamboos, in the pathway of the elephants. It is true, in the early mornings, we would see along the river banks whole families of monkeys basking in the warm sunshine, and talking over the plans of the day, but as we passed along they would retire into the depths of the forest. These forests could not be infested with tigers and other dangerous animals, as we frequently passed Karen families on foot, journeying from one village to another. The Karens have settlements all through the jungle. Their small villages consist of a few rude bamboo huts, and around them are cultivated their upland rice and cotton, while the mountain streams furnish them fish in abundance. Sometimes they raise fowls, and cultivate sweet potatoes, the red pepper, and flowers. They seldom remain over two or three seasons in the valleys, but move away to fresh land. Our forest paths led through many abandoned Karen villages and plantations, where now rank weeds and young bamboos supplant the fields of rice and cotton. The Karens with whom we came in contact were mountain heathen Karens. They seemed to possess no wealth, cultivating only sufficient land to clothe and feed themselves. The women were fairer than the Siamese or Birmeese ; and it was a pleasant sight to see them always cheerful and industrious—pounding

paddy, weaving their garments, or otherwise occupied in their simple household duties, and lightening their toil by singing plaintive native songs. One can well understand how, among such a people, so gentle and inoffensive, Christian missions have had great success.

“As our elephant drivers and guides were always anxious to lodge in these Karen villages, and as we were frequently delayed by obstructions in our pathway, we did not average over five hours of travel per day. With the exception of two nights, we were not compelled to sleep in the jungle, but lodged in Siamese or Karen villages. We were always treated with great kindness, and not in a single instance, for boats, elephants, food, or lodging, was the question of remuneration so much as stated. Most of the way we were able to purchase rice and fish, and sometimes eggs and fowls; but most of the Karens seemed quite destitute of *variety* in food. We usually paid fifty cents per day for each elephant, and the same amount for each night's lodging, while the entire expense of our journey from Bangkok to Maulmain did not exceed seventy-five dollars.

“I cannot close this part of my article without a few remarks about elephants and their drivers. On arriving at our resting-place for the night, it was usual to turn the elephants (partially fettered) loose among the bamboos; thus, nearly all night long, we could hear the snapping of the tall reeds in order that the leaves might be stripped for food. When this noise was not heard, we could usually



hear the tinkle of the elephants' bamboo bells, and thus know their locality. Some of the drivers, however, were always on the watch, and some one of the elephants was sure to be a favorite.

“When the elephants were grazing in the jungle, bright fires were always kindled, that blazed the long night through. The drivers, on these occasions, always boiled their rice in hollow green bamboos, and frequently the elephants would come forward for bits of rice or salt, and then retire. I remember awaking one night out of a sound sleep, and, looking towards the blaze and outstretched sleepers, espied one of the huge brutes seated on his haunches, like an immense dog, warming himself before the fire. So grave, comical, and strange the scene appeared, in the solemn midnight of the tropical forest, that I had to awaken my wife to behold the sight. The elephant driver sits on the head of the animal, and by the aid of a heavy knife, assists in clearing the forest pathway. Some years ago one of our elephants, in passing through the forest, had his trunk wound around a large bamboo, in the act of snapping it, when his driver, in attempting to assist with his knife, struck at the bamboo and cut the animal's proboscis half off, and thus exposed the air passages a foot from its extremity. The cut, owing to the restlessness of the animal, never united, though it healed; and thus, when the poor animal attempted to grasp a bamboo, the frightful opening was revealed. In our journey we rode fourteen different elephants, and all of them, without exception, behaved in the most gentle, intel-

ligent, and patient manner, mutual affection seeming to subsist between master and beast. At Bangkok, in one of the buildings adjoining the royal palace, the king has a so-called white elephant, which is treated with divine honors; and though I would not go thus far in dignifying a mere mass of matter, yet I am fully persuaded that most of the wonderful stories told of these noble brutes are strictly true.

“In making the journey from Bangkok to Maulmain, the traveller should start by the 1st of December, before the mountain streams have become too shallow. As the Me-Klong and Me-Klong Nee are very winding, the boat used should be flat-bottomed, and draw but little water, in order to cut across the long shallow bends in the rivers, and the more easily pass the numerous rapids. With four boatmen, willing and able to work ten or twelve hours per day, the distance from Bangkok to Bangsuan, at the headwaters of the Me-Klong Nee, ought to be made in twelve days. From Bangsuan, over the watershed of the Chang Mountains, to the headwaters of the Ataran, it is about thirty miles, to be made on foot in one day, or on elephants in two days. At the Karen village, at the headwaters of the Ataran, I would not advise any one to go down stream on a bamboo raft, but to purchase a small canoe, and engage two men to paddle to Maulmain, which ought to be reached in forty-eight hours.

“In conclusion, I think the journey may be made either way in from fifteen to eighteen days, dispensing almost entirely with elephant locomotion.

Some have thought that in the future a railway may be constructed over, substantially, the route indicated; this I very much doubt, as there seem to be insurmountable engineering difficulties."



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### VARIETIES OF SIAMESE LIFE.

THE impression which most travellers in Siam have received in regard to the moral characteristics of the people has been generally favorable, and is on the whole confirmed by the judgment of foreigners who have been longer resident among them. They have, of course, the defects and vices which are to be expected in a half savage people, governed through many generations by the capricious tyranny of an Oriental despotism. And the climate and natural conditions of the country are not suited to develop in them the hardier and nobler virtues. Industry and self-sacrifice can hardly be looked for as characteristics of people to whom nature is so bountiful as to require of them no exertion to provide either food or raiment. And on the other hand, with the sloth and inactivity to which nature invites, the animal passions, by indulgence, often become fierce and overmastering. But it seems to be agreed that if the Siamese lack the industry and economy of their neighbors the Chinese, they have not the passionate and sometimes treacherous character of the Malays. To the

traveller they seem inoffensive almost to timidity, and with a more than ordinary share of "natural affection." One of the Roman Catholic missionaries quoted in Bowring, says, "Parents know how to make themselves extremely beloved and respected, and Siamese children have great docility and sweetness. Parents answer to princes for the conduct of their children; they share in their chastisements, and deliver them up when they have offended. If the son takes flight, he never fails to surrender himself when the prince apprehends his father or his mother, or his other collateral relations older than himself, to whom he owes respect." Bowring himself testifies that "of the affection of parents for children and the deference paid by the young to the old, we saw abundant evidence in all classes of society. Fathers were constantly observed carrying about their offspring in their arms, and mothers engaged in adorning them. The king was never seen in public by us without some of his younger children near him; and we had no intercourse with the nobles where numbers of little ones were not on the carpets, grouped around their elders, and frequently receiving attention from them."

The large sums frequently expended in the decoration of the little children with anklets and bracelets and necklaces and chains of gold, (often hundreds of dollars in value and constituting their sole costume,) are another proof of the same parental fondness. The great beauty of the children has attracted the notice of almost all travellers, and

they seem as amiable as they are beautiful. Their skins are colored with a fine powder, of a deep, golden color, and an aromatic smell. "In the morning, Siamese mothers may be seen industriously engaged in *yellowing* their offspring from head to heel. So universal is the custom, that in caressing the children of the king or nobles, you may be certain to carry away yellow stains upon your dress. A small quantity mingled with quicklime makes a paste of a bright pink color, of which the consumption is so large for spreading on the betel-leaves which are used to wrap around the areca-nut, that I have seen whole boat-loads moving about for sale amidst the floating bazaars on the Meinam. This *curcuma* or Indian saffron is known to be the coloring matter in the curries, mulligatawnies and chutnees of India ;" and is thus seen to be available for the inside as well as the outside of men.

The relations between the sexes seem to be characterized by much propriety and decorum ; and though polygamy is permitted and practiced by the higher classes, and divorce is easy and somewhat frequent, yet, "on the whole," says Bowring, "the condition of woman is better in Siam than in most Oriental countries. The education of Siamese women is little advanced. Many of them are good musicians, but their principal business is to attend to domestic affairs ; they are as frequently seen as men in charge of boats on the Meinam ; they generally distribute alms to the bonzes, and attend the temples, bringing their offerings of flow-



ers and fruit. In the country they are busied with agricultural pursuits. They have seldom the art of plying the needle, as the Siamese garments almost invariably consist of a single piece of cloth." Some of the women are trained as actresses and as dancers; and there are peculiar accomplishments, held in high esteem among them, as, for instance, so to crook the arm at the elbow that it shall project forward as if the bone was broken. In some cases this accomplishment is so perfect that it gives all the effect of a physical deformity.

Scanty as is the dress of both sexes, there is seldom the least immodesty apparent; any undue exposure or approach to indecency would be visited with the immediate and severe disapprobation of the whole community. The proprieties of life have a somewhat different definition from that which they would attain in civilized and Christian society, but, so far as they are defined and understood, they are rigidly observed. Pallegoix sums up the moral qualities of the people as follows:

"They are gentle, cheerful, timid, careless and almost passionless. They are disposed to idleness, inconstancy and exaction; they are liberal almsgivers, severe in enforcing decorum between the sexes. They are fond of sports, and spend half their time in amusements. They are sharp and even witty in conversation, and resemble the Chinese in their aptitude for imitation." Of theatrical displays, rope-dancing and the like, they are extremely fond.

Of the acuteness and wit of a people, the best

evidence is to be found in their familiar proverbs, and the following may be cited (from Bowring) in illustration of the remark just quoted from Bishop Pallegoix on this subject :

“ When you go into a wood, do not forget your wood-knife.

“ An elephant though he has four legs may slip ; and a doctor is not always right.

“ Go up by land, you meet a tiger ; go down by water, you meet a crocodile.

“ If a dog bite you, do not bite him again.”

Between the luxury and splendor of the king's court and the poverty of the common people, there is of course the greatest and most painful contrast. The palaces of the first and second kings are filled with whatever the wealth and power of their owners can procure. The hovels of the common peasants are bare and comfortless, the furniture consisting only of a few coarse vessels of earthenware or wicker-work, and a mat or two spread upon the floor. Removed from the very lowest ranks, in the Siamese houses will be found carpenter's tools, a movable oven, various cooking utensils, both in copper and clay, spoons of mother-of-pearl, plates and dishes in metal and earthenware, and a large porcelain jar, and another of copper for fresh water. There is also a tea-set, and all the appliances for betel chewing and tobacco smoking, some stock of provisions and condiments for food.

The same contrast exists with regard to food and eating. The peasant is content with his bowl of rice, cooked and served in the simplest way, and





SIAMESE ROPE-DANCER





with his mouthful of fish. A Siamese state-dinner is an elaborate affair, of from sixty to a hundred dishes magnificently served.

“The ordinary meals of the Siamese are at 7 A.M. and 5.30 P.M., but the more opulent classes have a repast at midday. The guests help themselves out of a common dish with spoons or with their fingers, using or not small earthenware plates which are before them.

“Of the meals of the Siamese, Bishop Pallegoix says, ‘The Thai take their repasts seated on a mat or carpet. The dishes are in great brazen vases with a cover, over which a red cloth is placed; the meat is cut into small pieces, and the rice is kept apart in a large deep porringer on one side of the floor, while a great basin of water is on the other, having in it a drinking-cup. The guests have neither knives nor forks, but use a mother-of-pearl spoon to dip into the various dishes, of which after having eaten a sufficiency, they drink pure water or tea. To help themselves one after another from the same plate, to drink one after another from the same cup, has nothing strange. The husband is served at table by his wife. Social repasts are always silent, and seldom last more than a quarter of an hour. But no interruptions are permitted during meals, even in the case of dependents or slaves.’

“The Siamese, in cooking their rice, wash it four or five times, and place it in a pot or kettle filled with water; after boiling about three minutes, the water is poured out, the pot is placed upon a slow fire, where the rice is steamed without being

burnt ; its flavor is preserved, the different grains do not adhere to one another or stick to the fingers when eaten. Rice is used by the poor as the main aliment of life ; by the opulent as an accompaniment to their meals, as bread in Europe. Glutinous rice is employed either in flour or grains ; a favorite cake is thus prepared : the rice is cooked without water or steam ; it is then sprinkled with condiments consisting of ginger and other spices ; it is divided into small parcels, which are wrapped up in plantain leaves, and in twenty-four hours a sweet and vinous liquor exudes, when the cake is fit for eating ; if kept longer, they become intoxicating, and if distilled produce arak, which, subject to re-distillation, gives a strong and fragrant drink."

It is hardly necessary to remark that the Siamese mode of cooking rice is suited equally to any climate or country. Those who have been accustomed to the pasty and dingy mass which our Celtic cooks are accustomed to serve up under that name, would hardly imagine the excellence and attractiveness of the light, feathery dish which is prepared in the way described. Cooked in this way, and eaten with the delicious curry which cannot be imitated outside of the Indies, it is not the least of the many delicacies with which the table may be spread. We may add that the rice of Siam is of excellent quality, and is produced in great abundance. Once or twice the exportations to southern China have saved that country from severe famine. The Siamese are certainly, as a whole, a sober people. Tea is used almost as universally as in Chi-



na, and coffee is used among the wealthier classes. From the great vice of Eastern Asia, the use of opium, they are almost free, though the Chinese resident in Siam cannot be restrained, even by the severest penalties, from the traffic and use of it.

Thus far the Siamese have suffered little from drunkenness, which is, indeed, rather the vice of colder climates. The quiet, sober, inoffensive conduct of the people has been remarked upon by all travellers.

Until the reign of the present king, slavery prevailed to a great extent. But the nineteenth century is proving to be an era of emancipation in three continents. In Russia, in the United States, and now, last of all, in Siam, the yoke of bondage is broken. At the time of Bowring's visit, in 1855, it was estimated that "one third of the population of Siam are in the condition of slaves; these are divided into three classes, (1) prisoners of war, (2) redeemable, and (3) unredeemable slaves. When a foreign country is invaded, the captives are distributed among the nobles, according to the king's pleasure; these captives are transferable at a ransom of 48 ticals (six pounds) each. Redeemable slaves consist principally of those whose persons are in pawn for debt, and whose services are suffered to pay the interest of the debt. They may be ransomed by the discharge of the debt. Unredeemable slaves are children sold by their parents under written contract, and are at the absolute disposal of the purchaser. The price of a slave varies according to age and sex; from twelve to six-

teen, the ordinary value is from 40 to 60 ticals; a full-grown man is worth from 80 to 160 ticals. The slavery to which they are subjected is not that of field labor." The impression of competent observers seemed to be that the slaves were kindly treated, as kindly as domestic servants in Europe—sometimes made members of the family, and always more or less under the protection of law. But on the other hand, there were often to be met, in the streets of Bangkok, sorrowful-looking persons in chains, "men and women in larger or smaller groups, attended by an officer of police bearing a large staff or stick, as the emblem of authority. The weight of the chains is apportioned to the magnitude of the offence for which the bearer is suffering. I understood," says Bowering, "a large portion of these prisoners to be debtors. If a person cannot pay what he owes, his body is delivered over to his creditors. There is no redemption but by the act of the creditor or the payment of the debt. Friends or relatives often interfere for its discharge. The legal rate of interest being thirty per cent., it may well be conceived how rapidly ruin will overtake an unfortunate debtor."

It is pleasant to think that these pictures belong to a past age, and that the young king now on the throne has won for himself the high distinction of abolishing by a word a system which, however humane in its administration, and however restricted and managed by legal enactments, must have in-

volved untold suffering to those who were the victims of it. The abolition of slavery in Siam is not the least of the steps by which this ancient kingdom is advancing in Christian civilization.



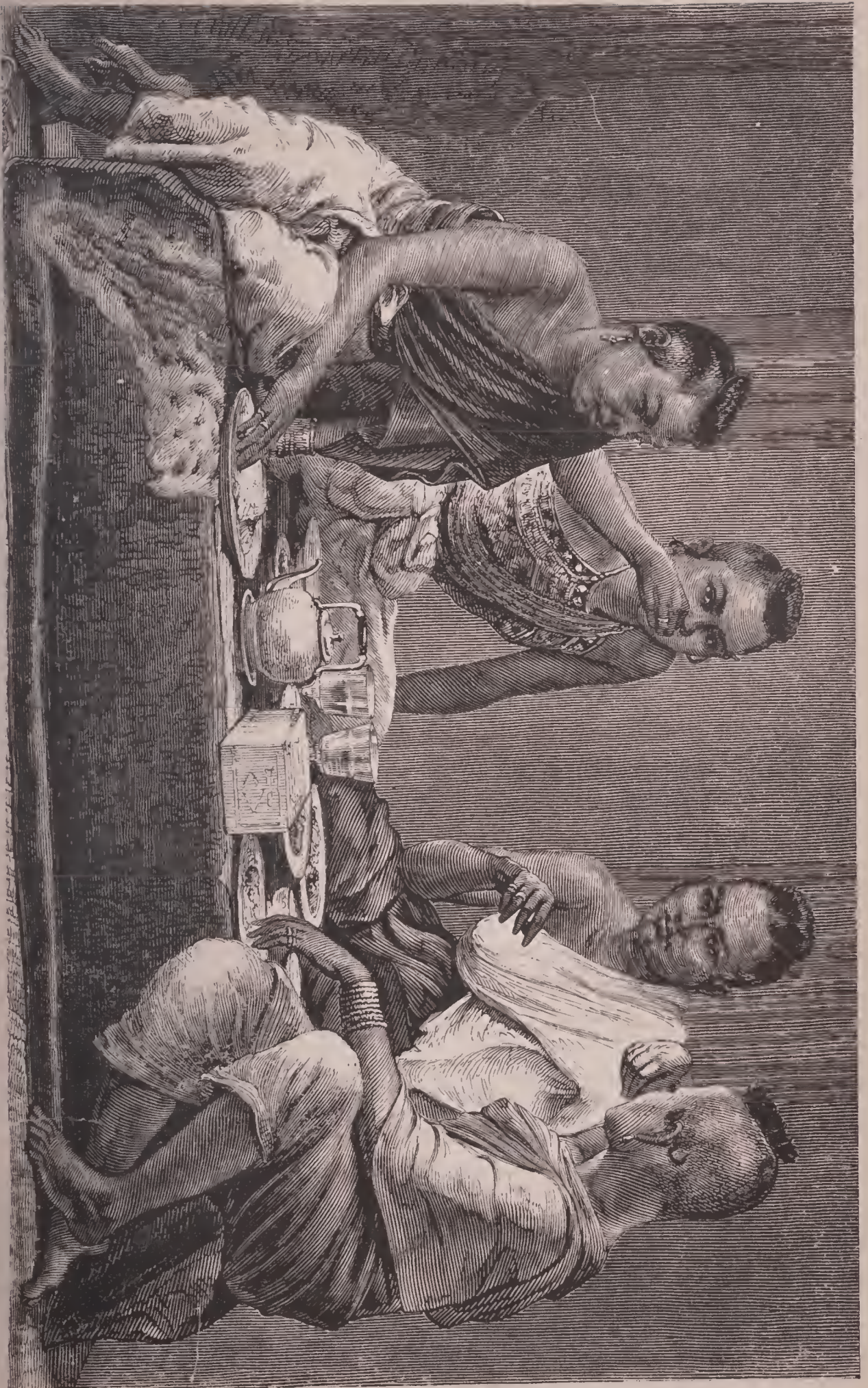
## CHAPTER XIX.

### BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS.

WITH all the great progress in enlightenment and civilization which has been witnessed in Siam during the last twenty years, (chiefly during the reign of the last king,) the manners and customs of the country still exhibit a curious degree of savagery and superstition. Some of the customs are barbarously cruel, and some are barbarously magnificent. A glimpse at the customs connected with birth, marriage, and death will be interesting, and will illustrate the peculiarities of Siamese fashion. For birth, marriage, and death, in Siam as elsewhere, are recognized as the three crises of human life. To these three the Siamese have added a fourth—the shaving of the tuft of the young men when they come of age—to mark the entrance upon adult life.

“There are,” says Bowring, “certain imposing ceremonies, called *Tham Khuan*, which mark these principal events or eras in the life of a Siamese. These commemorations are never neglected, and even in the case of the less privileged classes are made the subject of much display. A sort of altar





SIAMESE LADIES AT DINNER.







is erected of planks or bamboos, having seven steps of ascent, which are carpeted with fresh banana-leaves. Each of the steps is ornamented with grotesque figures of angels and animals in clay, paper, or carved out of calabashes. Vessels of metal or porcelain are crowded with meats and fruits. On the upper stages are garlands of flowers, and leaves of tinsel, gold, and silver, in the midst of which is a fresh cocoa-nut. At the foot of the altar are nine chandeliers, whose wax candles are kindled at a signal given by three discharges of a musket. One of the candles is seized by the person in whose honor the ceremonial has been prepared, and he walks three times round the altar; when his friends approach, each seizes one of the wax-lights, which he blows out over the head of 'the ordained,' so that its smoke may envelop his forehead. Then the fresh cocoa-nut is given him that he may drink its milk, eating with it a hard egg; and a cup containing coins to the value of about four pence is presented to him. At this moment a band of instruments breaks into music, and the ceremony ends.

“Marriages are the subject of much negotiation, undertaken not directly by the parents, but by ‘go-betweens,’ nominated by those of the proposed bridegroom, who make proposals to the parents of the intended bride. A second repulse puts the extinguisher on the attempted treaty; but if successful, a large boat, gaily adorned with flags and accompanied by music, is laden with garments, plate, fruits, betel, etc. In the centre is a huge cake or cakes, in the form of a pyramid, printed in bright

colors. The bridegroom accompanies the procession to the house of his future father-in-law, where the lady's dowry and the day for the celebration of the marriage are fixed. It is incumbent on the bridegroom to erect or to occupy a house near that of his intended, and a month or two must elapse before he can carry away his bride. No religious rites accompany the marriage, though bonzes are invited to the feast, whose duration and expense depend upon the condition of the parties. Music is an invariable accompaniment. Marriages take place early; I have seen five generations gathered round the head of a family. I asked the senior Somdetch how many of his descendants lived in his palace; he said he did not know, but there were a hundred or more. It was indeed a frequent answer to the inquiry in the upper ranks, 'What number of children and grandchildren have you?' 'Oh, multitudes; we cannot tell how many.' I inquired of the first king how many children had been born to him; he said, 'Twelve before I entered the priesthood, and eleven since I came to the throne.' I have generally observed that a pet child is selected from the group to be the special recipient of the smiles and favors of the head of the race.

"Though wives or concubines are kept in any number according to the wealth or will of the husband, the wife who has been the object of the marriage ceremony, called the *Khan mak*, takes precedence of all the rest, and is really the sole legitimate spouse; and she and her descendants are the only legal heirs to the husband's possessions. Marriages

are permitted beyond the first degree of affinity. Divorce is easily obtained on application from the woman, in which case the dowry is restored to the wife. If there be only one child, it belongs to the mother, who takes also the third, fifth, and all those representing odd numbers; the husband has the second, fourth, and so forth. A husband may sell a wife that he has purchased, but not one who has brought him a dowry. If the wife is a party to contracting debts on her husband's behalf, she may be sold for their redemption, but not otherwise."

One natural result of polygamy is not only to take away from the beauty and dignity of the marriage relation, but also to lessen the amount of ceremony with which the marriage is celebrated. A Siamese of the higher class is generally "so much married," that it is hardly worth his while to make much fuss about it, or indulge in much parade on the occasion. Accordingly the ceremonial would seem to be much less than that of burial. For a man can die but once, and his funeral is not an event to be many times repeated.

"There is an extraordinary usage connected with childbirth. The event has no sooner taken place than the mother is placed near a large fire, where she remains for weeks exposed to the burning heat; death is often caused by this exposure. So universal is the usage, so strong the prejudice in its favor, among high and low, that the king himself has vainly attempted to interfere; and his young and beautiful wife, though in a state of extreme peril and suffering, was subjected to this torture, and died



while 'before the fire'—a phrase employed by the Siamese to answer the inquiry made as to the absence of the mother. A medical missionary told me he had been lately called in to prescribe for a lady who was 'before the fire;' but ere he had reached the house, the patient had died, and both body and funeral pile had been removed. There seems some mysterious idea of pacification, such as in some shape or other prevails in many parts of the world, associated with so cruel a rite. Mothers nurse their children till they are two or three years old, nourishing them at the same time with rice and bananas."

This singular custom is more carefully described by Dr. Bradley, one of the American missionaries. The occasion was the first confinement of the wife of the late second king, in the year 1835. Dr. Bradley was dining with a party of friends at the house of the Portuguese consul. He says: "Just before we rose from table, a messenger from Prince Chowfah-noi [the late second king] came, apologizing for his master's absence from the dinner, and requesting my attendance on his wife in her first parturition. The call for me, although silently given, was quickly understood by all the party, and the interest which it excited was of no ordinary character, because it indicated a violation of the sacred rules, absurdities and cruelties of Siamese midwifery, and that too by the second man in the kingdom.

"I was obedient to the call, and was forthwith conducted thither in H. R. Highness's boat after

I had accompanied my wife to our home. The prince was at the landing awaiting my arrival. His salutation in English was most expressive, indicating peculiar pleasure in seeing me, informing me that his wife had given birth to a daughter a little before my arrival, and saying that in accordance with Siamese custom, she was lying by a fire. He expressed great abhorrence of the custom, and desired me to prevail upon his friends and the midwives to dispense with it, and substitute the English custom. To confirm him still more in his opinion that the English custom was incomparably the best, I spread before him many arguments and appealed to humanity itself. He appeared to enter fully into my views, saying that his wife was of the same opinion, but expressed much fear that no improvement could be made in her situation in consequence of the influence of the ex-queen, his mother, and princesses and midwives.

“ I was not allowed to see his wife until after his mother and princesses had retired, which was not till quite late in the evening. The prince went a little time before me to prepare the way, and then sent his chamberlain to conduct me to the house of his wife, where he received me, and led me to the bedside of his suffering companion. She was surrounded by a multitude of old women affecting wondrous wisdom in the treatment of their patient. The fiery ordeal had indeed commenced, and the poor woman was doomed to lie before a hot fire a full month. I found the mother lying on a narrow wooden bench without a cushion, elevated above

the floor eight or ten inches, with her bare back exposed to a hot fire about eighteen inches distant. The fire, I presume to say, was sufficiently hot to have roasted a spare-rib at half the distance. Having lain a little time in this position, she was rolled over and had her abdomen exposed to the flame.

“ With all the reasoning and eloquence I could employ, both through the prince and speaking directly to them, I could not persuade the ignorant women that it would be prudent to suspend their course of treatment, even for a night, so that the sufferer might have a little quiet rest on a comfortable bed. They said that the plan of treatment which I proposed was entirely new to them, and that I was also a stranger, and therefore it would not do at all to expose so honorable a personage to the dangers of an *experiment*.

“ The prince then informed me that this amount of fire was to be continued three days, after which its intensity would have to be doubled, and continued for 30 days, as it was the mother’s first child. The custom, he said, is to abridge the term to 25, 20, 18, 15 and 11 days according to the number of children the woman has had.

“ Having had a look at the infant princess lying in a neatly-curtained bed, I retired from the place with scarcely any expectation that my visit would effect any immediate good.

“ I visited Chowfah-noi the next evening in company with Mrs. B. The thought had occurred to me that she could probably exert more influence with the females than I could, and that possibly



she might induce them to adopt my plan of practice in relation to the mother and the child. We were heartily welcomed by his royal highness, who first took much pleasure in showing us all his curiosities, and then gave us an interview with his lady. She was still lying by a hot fire, and complained much of soreness of the hips from pressure on the hard couch. At first she seemed to be somewhat abashed at the presence of Mrs. B., whom she had never before seen. But it was not long ere that was all exchanged for a good degree of intimacy, seeing that she was a woman like herself. Mrs. B. prevailed on her to take some of my medicine and to have the child put to the breast of its mother instead of giving it up to a wet-nurse. But though she made the experiment in our presence, there was no reason to think that it was continued.

“ Two days later the prince sent for me in great haste about 2 P.M. to see his wife and child. I hastened to the palace, but was too late to do anything for the child, as it had died a little before my arrival. The prince was evidently much affected at the death of his first-born, and there was much weeping among the relatives and servants, who had congregated in multitudes in apartments adjacent to the room which the mother occupied. The prince was very anxious concerning his wife, and seemed to wish with all his heart to have her taken out of the hands of native physicians and placed under my care. This he labored indefatigably to accomplish for more than two hours, while I waited for the result. But to his sorrow he at length reported

that he could not succeed, and said that his mother and sisters and physicians, together with a multitude of conceited and headstrong old women, were too much for him, and that he would be obliged to allow them to go on in their own way, however hazardous the consequences. He wished me to give him the privilege of sending for me if his wife should by her own physicians be considered in a dangerous way. I had declined doing anything in the case unless I could have the entire care of the patient, fearing that if I attempted to administer while the native means were being employed, I should bring reproach both upon European medical practice, and the dear cause which I had espoused."

In this connection, it may be interesting to quote (from Bowring) as a specimen of the methods of the native physicians in the treatment of disease, a prescription for what was called by the doctor who administered the dose "morbific fever." What became of the unfortunate being to whom it was given is not stated, and we can only indulge in the most dismal and harrowing conjectures. The *recipe* is as follows :

"One portion of rhinoceros horn, one of elephant's tusk, one of tiger's, and the same of crocodile's teeth ; one bear's tooth, one portion composed of three parts bones of vulture, raven, and goose ; one portion of bison, and another of stag's horn, one portion of sandal. These ingredients to be mixed together on a stone with pure water ; one half of the mixture to be swallowed, the rest to be rubbed

into the body ; after which the morbid fever will depart." But what a very dreadful thing the morbid fever must be, that it is necessary to bring to bear upon it the combined ferocity of all the savage creatures of the forest and the flood !

"Shaving the hair tuft of children is a great family festival, to which relations and friends are invited, to whom presents of cakes and fruits are sent. A musket-shot announces the event. Priests recite prayers, and wash the head of the young person, who is adorned with all the ornaments and jewels accessible to the parents. Music is played during the ceremony, which is performed by the nearest relatives ; and congratulations are addressed, with gifts of silver, to the newly-shorn. Sometimes the presents amount to large sums of money. Dramatic representations among the rich accompany the festivity, which in such case lasts for several days.

"Education begins with the shaving the tuft ; and the boys are then sent to the pagodas to be instructed by the bonzes in reading and writing, and in the dogmas of religion. They give personal service in return for the education they receive ; that education is worthless enough, but every Siamese is condemned to pass a portion of his life in the temple, which many of them never afterwards quit. Hence the enormous supply of an unproductive, idle, useless race.

"When a Thai (or Siamese) is at the point of death, the talapoins are sent for, who sprinkle lustral water upon the sufferer, recite passages which speak of the vanity of earthly things from their sa-



cred books, and cry out, repeating the exclamation in the ears of the dying, 'Arahang! arahang!' (a mystical word implying the purity or exemption of Buddha from concupiscence). When the dying has heaved his last breath, the whole family utter piercing cries, and address their lamentations to the departed:—'O father benefactor! why leave us? What have we done to offend you? Why depart alone? It was your own fault. Why did you eat the fruit that caused the dysentery? We foretold it; why did not you listen to us? O misery! O desolation! O inconstancy of human affairs!' And they fling themselves at the feet of the dead, weep, wail, kiss, utter a thousand tender reproaches, till grief has exhausted its lamentable expressions. The body is then washed and enveloped in white cloth; it is placed in a coffin covered with gilded paper, and decorated with tinsel flowers; a dais is prepared, ornamented with the same materials as the coffin, but with wreaths of flowers and a number of wax-lights. After a day or two, the coffin is removed, not through the door, but through an opening specially made in the wall; the coffin is escorted thrice round the house at full speed, in order that the dead, forgetting the way through which he has passed, may not return to molest the living. The coffin is then taken to a large barge, and placed on a platform, surmounted by the dais, to the sound of melancholy music. The relations and friends, in small boats, accompany the barge to the temple where the body is to be burnt. Being arrived, the coffin is opened and delivered to the officials charged with





BUILDING ERECTED AT FUNERAL OF SIAMESE OF HIGH RANK.







the cremation, the corpse having in his mouth a silver tical (2s. 6d. in value) to defray the expenses. The burner first washes the face of the corpse with cocoa-nut milk; and if the deceased have ordered that his body shall be delivered to vultures and crows, the functionary cuts it up and distributes it to the birds of prey which are always assembled in such localities. The corpse being placed upon the pile, the fire is kindled. When the combustion is over, the relatives assemble, collect the principal bones, which they place in an urn, and convey them to the family abode. The garb of mourning is white, and is accompanied by the shaving of the head. The funerals of the opulent last for two or three days. There are fireworks, sermons from the bonzes, nocturnal theatricals, where all sorts of monsters are introduced. Seats are erected within the precincts of the temples, and games and gambling accompany the rites connected with the dead."

At the death of any member of the royal family, the funeral ceremonies become a matter of national importance. If it is the king who is dead, the whole country is in mourning; all heads are shaved. The ceremonies at the cremation of the body of the late first king lasted from the 12th of March (1870) till the 21st of the same month. The king of Chieng-mai came from his distant home among the Laos mountains to be present on the occasion; and the pomp and expense of the ceremony, for which preparations had been more than a year in progress, surpassed anything that had been known

in the history of Siam. The following description of the funeral of one of the high commissioners who negotiated the English treaty, and who died a few days after the signing of the treaty, was furnished to Sir John Bowring by an eye-witness. The ceremonies at the royal funeral were not dissimilar, though on a more extensive scale.

“The building of the ‘*men*,’ or temple, in which the burning was to take place, occupied four months; during the whole of which time between three and four hundred men were constantly engaged. The whole of it was executed under the personal superintendence of the ‘*Kalahome*.’

“It would be difficult to imagine a more beautiful object than this temple was, when seen from the opposite side of the river. The style of architecture was similar to that of the other temples in Siam; the roof rising in the centre, and thence running down in a series of gables, terminating in curved points. The roof was covered entirely with scarlet and gold, whilst the lower part of the building was blue, with stars of gold. Below, the temple had four entrances leading directly to the pyre; upon each side, as you entered, were placed magnificent mirrors, which reflected the whole interior of the building, which was decorated with blue and gold, in the same manner as the exterior. From the roof depended immense chandeliers, which at night increased the effect beyond description. Sixteen large columns, running from north to south, supported the roof. The entire height of the building must have been 120 feet, its length about fifty feet,

and breadth forty feet. In the centre was a raised platform, about seven feet high, which was the place upon which the urn containing the body was to be placed; upon each side of this were stairs covered with scarlet and gold cloth.

“This building stood in the centre of a piece of ground of about two acres extent, the whole of which ground was covered over with close rattan-work, in order that visitors might not wet their feet, the ground being very muddy.

“This ground was enclosed by a wall, along the inside of which myriads of lamps were disposed, rendering the night as light as the day. The whole of the grounds belonging to the adjoining temple contained nothing but tents, under which Siamese plays were performed by dancing-girls during the day; during the night, transparencies were in vogue. Along the bank of the river, Chinese and Siamese plays (performed by men) were in great force; and to judge by the frequent cheering of the populace, no small talent was shown by the performers, which talent in Siam consists entirely in obscenity and vulgarity.

“All approaches were blocked up long before daylight each morning, by hundreds—nay, thousands of boats of every description in Siam, *sampans*, *mapet*, *ma k'êng*, *ma guen*, etc., etc.; these were filled with presents of white cloth, no other presents being accepted or offered during a funeral. How many ship-loads of fine shirting were presented during those few days it is impossible to say. Some conception of the number of boats may be had from



the fact that, in front of my floating house, I counted seventy-two large boats, all of which had brought cloth.

“The concourse of people night and day was quite as large as at any large fair in England; and the whole scene, with the drums and shows, the illuminations and the fireworks, strongly reminded me of Greenwich Fair at night. The varieties in national costume were considerable, from the long flowing dresses of the Mussulman to the scanty *pan-hung* of the Siamese.

“Upon the first day of the ceremonies, when I rose at daylight, I was quite surprised at the number and elegance of the large boats that were dashing about the river in every direction; some of them with elegantly-formed little spires (two in each boat) of a snowy-white, picked out with gold; others with magnificent scarlet canopies, with curtains of gold; others filled with soldiers dressed in red, blue, or green, according to their respective regiments; the whole making a most effective *tableau*, far superior to any we had during the time the embassy was here.

“Whilst I was admiring this scene, I heard the cry of ‘*Sedet*,’ (the name of the king when he goes out,) and turning round, beheld the fleet of the king’s boats sweeping down. His majesty stopped at the ‘*men*,’ where an apartment had been provided for him. The moment the king left his boat, the most intense stillness prevailed—a silence that was absolutely painful; this was, after the lapse of a few seconds, broken by a slight stroke of a tom-tom.





BUILDING FOR THE INCREMATION OF SIAMESE OF HIGH RANK.





At that sound, every one on shore and in the boats fell on their knees, and silently and imperceptibly the barge containing the high priest parted from the shore at the Somdetch's palace, and floated with the tide towards the 'men.' This barge was immediately followed by that containing the urn, which was placed upon a throne in the centre of the boat. One priest knelt upon the lower part of the urn in front, and one at the back. (It had been constantly watched since his death.) Nothing could exceed the silence and *immovability* of the spectators; the tales I used to read of nations being turned to statues were here realized, with the exception that all had the same attitude. It was splendid, but it was fearful. During the whole of the next day, the urn staid in the 'men,' in order that the people might come and pay their last respects.

“The urn, or rather, its exterior cover, was composed of the finest gold, elegantly carved and studded with innumerable diamonds. It was about five feet high, and two feet in diameter.

“Upon the day of the burning, the two kings arrived about four P. M. The golden cover was taken off, and an interior urn of brass now contained the body, which rested upon cross-bars at the bottom of the urn. Beneath were all kinds of odoriferous gums.

“The first king, having distributed yellow cloths to an indefinite quantity of priests, ascended the steps which led to the pyre, holding in his hand a lighted candle, and set fire to the inflammable materials beneath the body. After him came the second

king, who placed a bundle of candles in the flames ; then followed the priests, then the princes, and lastly the relations and friends of the deceased. The flames rose constantly above the vase, but there was no unpleasant smell.

“ His majesty, after all had thrown in their candles, returned to his seat, where he distributed to the Europeans a certain number of limes, each containing a gold ring or a small piece of money ; then he commenced *scrambling* the limes, and seemed to take particular pleasure in just throwing them between the princes and the missionaries, in order that they might meet together in the ‘ tug of war.’

“ The next day, the bones were taken out, and distributed amongst his relations ; and this closed the ceremonies. During the whole time, the river each night was covered with fireworks ; and in Siam the pyrotechnic art is far from being despicable.”

## CHAPTER XX.

### OLD AND NEW BANGKOK.

SO rapid and so extensive are the improvements which the present king of Siam has undertaken, that something of the picturesque beauty of the capital has already disappeared, and its resemblance to a European city begins to be somewhat apparent. Wheeled vehicles have begun to be introduced where once the dreamy silence of the watery streets was unbroken except by the plash of oars and the cry of the oarsmen as they bent to their work. A carriage road from Bangkok to Paknam, thirty miles distant, at the mouth of the river, and a broad drive-way of the kind which it is now fashionable to call a *boulevard*, and upon which the high life of Bangkok may display itself with such splendor of equipage as it may choose, are among the improvements which the young king has undertaken. Moreover, he has adopted a costume more closely European than that worn by his father or by any of his predecessors. The days of trouserless legs are over in Siam, at least in the fashionable circles of Siam ; for not only does the



king set the example by wearing trousers of an Occidental pattern—though as yet somewhat loose and baggy—but, as if the example of a king were not in itself sufficient, he has ordained that any of his princes and noblemen adopting a similar costume, shall be exempt from the obligation of prostrating themselves in his presence. There is indeed an obvious logical relation between costume and custom, which makes this edict of the king a proper one.

The king too has been abroad, not only fulfilling his father's partly-formed intention of a visit to Singapore, but extending his voyage as far as Calcutta. Such a voyage, with the glimpse of the outside world which it affords, will be sure to result in the introduction of still more of western style and custom. And the beautiful old city, hidden so long in its picturesque and lonely splendor, will become, in its degree, like other cities of the world, busy with its merchandise and commerce, cursed with the vices of civilization, as well as blessed with its strength and excellence. Already the shipping-list of the port shows an increase during the last twenty years, from nine vessels in 1847, to three hundred and forty-seven sailing vessels, and thirty-nine steamers in 1870. The vessels under the Siamese flag alone, numbered (in 1870) one hundred and ten sailing vessels and eighteen steamers. The total value of the cargoes of vessels entered in 1870 was no less than \$4,190,733.00, while the value of cargoes of vessels cleared during the same year amounted to more than six and a half millions of

dollars. The chief article of export is rice, which is sent not only to the ports of China, of Japan, and of the East Indies, but also to Australia and even to Europe and America. Spices of various kinds, cotton, sugar, ivory, rose-wood, sapan-wood, teak timber, ebony, and other productions of the tropics, in which Siam can compete with any country in the world, are also in the list of exports for the current year.

During the reign of the last kings the change had already begun, and the modernizing of the city was apparent. The new palace of the king at Bangkok is in a European style of architecture, and the furniture of the kings' houses was in large measure so Occidental that one could easily forget, sitting and talking in the English language, amid surroundings so homelike and familiar, that he was in the remote East, and at the court of an Asiatic ruler. The tastes of the young man now on the throne have been turned even more strongly in the same direction, for the reason that he was for two years under the instruction of an English lady, Mrs. Leon-owens, as his governess. That her influence over him was appreciable is evident from the letter of pleasant and grateful remembrance, in which he wrote to her after his accession to the throne; although the young king's English is not very much better than his father's was, and the affectation of grandiloquent and condescending patronage is quite as sublime as was his father's in his loftiest moments.

But great as are the changes which are in process

or in preparation, there are some features of the city which are likely to remain unaltered. The introduction of wheeled vehicles is not likely ever to supersede the carriage by water, for which the facilities are so great, and the variety and liveliness of which are so attractive. No traveller will ever forget the beauty of the Bangkok boats. Some of them are as much as a hundred and twenty feet long, and moved by as many as a hundred oarsmen, who sit facing forward, and use their short, broad-bladed oars as paddles. The paddlers of the royal boats are dressed in scarlet, and wear a picturesque head-dress. The strokes of the paddle are strong and regular. The stem and stern are raised high above the body of the barge, and generally represent the head and tail of some monster. The effect of the boat is as of a living creature with a hundred legs and rearing head. It is "guided by means of long oars, by one or more steersmen, who from their elevated position on the poop give the word of command to the rowers, who are seated below. There is a roofed cabin, adorned sometimes with curtains of crimson and gold silk, either in the centre or near the stern, in which is the place of honor, and the height and ornaments of the cabin designate the rank or the functions of the occupant."

So, too, the general architecture of the city is likely to remain for a long time unchanged; and it is on the whole so convenient and much of it so beautiful, that any sweeping changes would seem likely to be for the worse.



“ A great proportion of the houses float on large rafts, and are sometimes seen moving up and down the river, conveying all the belongings of a family to some newly selected locality. It is a curious sight to witness these locomotive abodes, sometimes consisting of many apartments, loosened from the cables which have attached them to a particular spot, and going forth on their travels to fresh destinations. On the borders of the river there are scarcely any but floating houses, which can at any time be detached and removed bodily, and without any inconvenience, at the will of the owner.

“ There are a few houses in Bangkok built of stone and brick ; but those of the middle classes are of wood, while the habitations of the poor are constructed of light bamboos, and roofed with leaves of the atap palm. Fires are frequent ; and from the combustible character of the erections, hundreds of habitations are often destroyed. But in a few days the mischief is generally repaired, for on such occasions friends and neighbors lend a willing hand.

“ A house generally consists of two divisions ; one occupied by the males, the other by the females. The piles on which they are built are sunk three or four feet into the ground ; and the floor is raised six or eight feet from its surface, and is reached by a rude ladder, which, if the front of the house be towards the river, is made accessible at low tide. Of the floating houses, some are of boards, others of bamboo, or either wicker-work or palm-leaves. These houses have generally a verandah in front, and a small wing at each end. When used for shops

or warehouses the whole frontage is removed, and the contents exposed for inspection to the boats which pass by on the river.

“The existence of the people of Bangkok may be called amphibious. The children pass much of their time in the water, paddling and diving and swimming as if it were their native element. Boats often run against one another, and those within them are submerged in the water; but it seldom happens that any life is lost, or mischief done to the persons whose boats are run down. I have again and again seen boats bottom upward, whose owners have floated them to the shore, or otherwise repaired the damage done as speedily as possible. The constant occurrence of petty disasters seems to reconcile everybody to their consequences. Generally speaking, the boats are paddled about with consummate dexterity, the practice being acquired from the earliest trainings of childhood.”

The walls around Bangkok describe a circumference of nearly five miles. They are twelve feet high and nine broad. But, as is apt to be the case with large cities, the mural or legal limits of it do not include all the population which properly belongs to the city. The present population of the city can with difficulty be ascertained, but it is probably more than half a million.

Dr. Bradley, one of the American missionaries, who has resided more than thirty-five years in Bangkok, testifies to the growth and improvement of the city during that time. The number of floating houses, always inconsiderable compared with

the more permanent dwellings, is steadily decreasing. The style of stilted dwellings raised a few feet above the ground will probably be long continued, owing to the security which they give against all kinds of vermin which might otherwise infest them. The density of the population of the city would hardly be suspected until the observer should look down upon it from some lofty eminence. Even—

“ An elevation of eighty or one hundred feet will not carry you up sufficiently high to see a hundredth part of the houses that thickly stud the river-banks and all the canals, because of the high and dense foliage of the cocoa-nuts, betel, palmyra, mangosteen, tamarind and a great variety of other fruit and flowering trees which so hide most of the vast prospect as to make it appear to be little else than a dense primeval forest. But it is a forest ‘ of living green,’ and we may almost say of ‘ never withering flowers.’ A richer foliage, year in and year out, cannot, probably, be found anywhere on earth. Should you ascend the great watch-tower near the palace of the first king, you would see at your feet, and to the north and the south a mile or two each way, a density of human dwellings, but with the exception of the 15 acres included in *Wat Pra Chetoophon*, and the 43 in the palace of the first king, and 40 in the palace of the second king, and 20 or more in *Wat Maha-tat* the buildings are not nearly as compact as in our great western cities. And looking to the eastward, you would see, even within the city walls, that ‘ there remaineth yet much land to be possessed.’ Thirty-



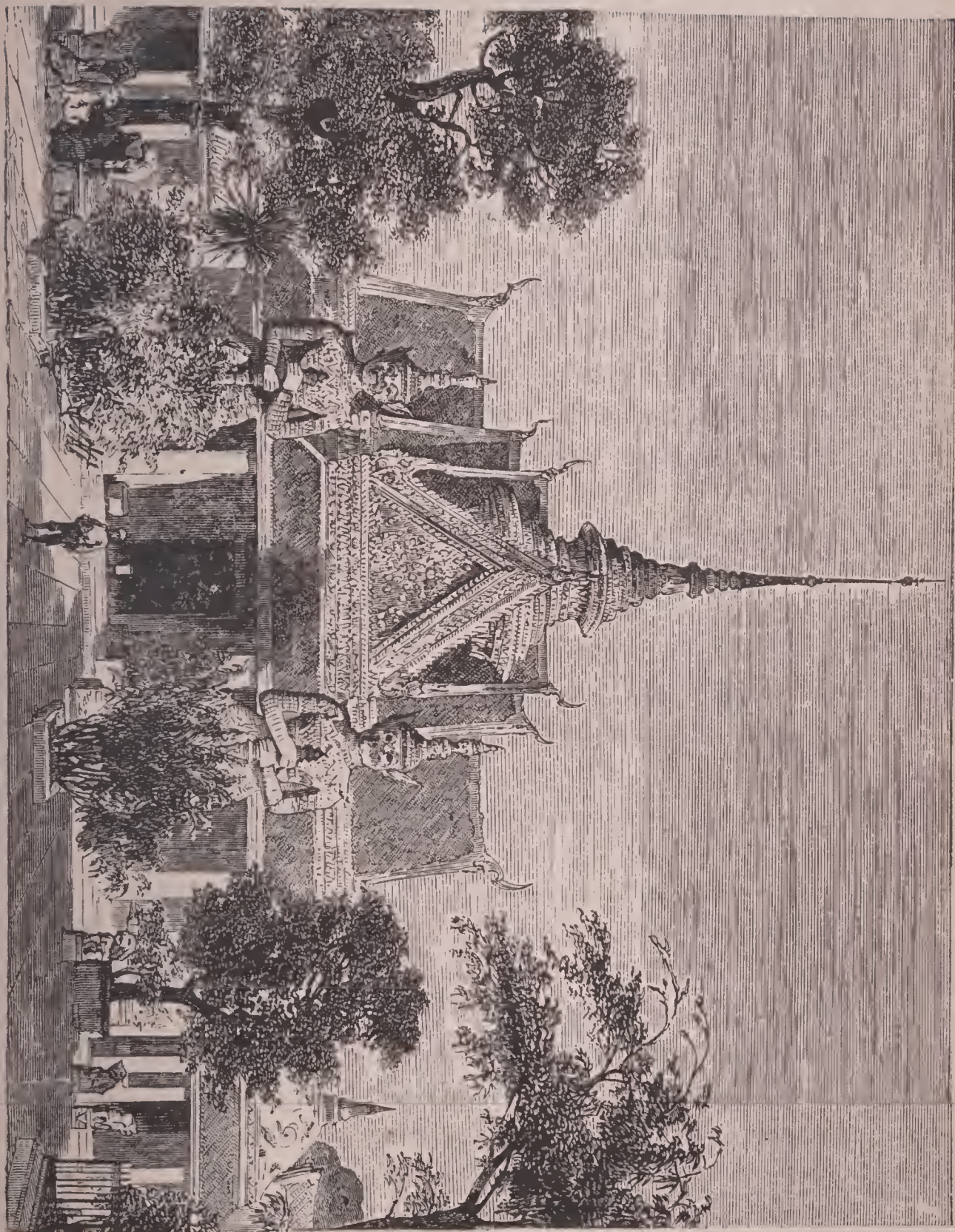
five years ago the area comprised within the citadel had much more of ground than now, which might well have led foreign observers to think, that that unoccupied ground was left for the purpose of having ample room for the people to flee to, and find refuge under cover of the city walls in times of invasion from the enemy. Looking from this observatory westward, your vision crosses the river but a little way, and then is expanded on what seems to be an unbroken forest, although it is in truth full of canals, houses, gardens, orchards and paddy-fields. Looking upon the face of the broad Meinam, you will see her still and glistening like a dim mirror, lying in the form of a monstrous letter S, and yet animated with human beings, gliding on her bosom in all kinds of water-craft, and you will see a line of shipping extending from the upper fort down the river three miles, thickly moored in the middle of the stream. The only objects to break the even circle of the horizon as you look at it in the clearest day from this standpoint, are the mountains of Bangplasoi and Petchaburee. But the air is very seldom clear enough for this sight with the naked eye, and not very often even with a glass."

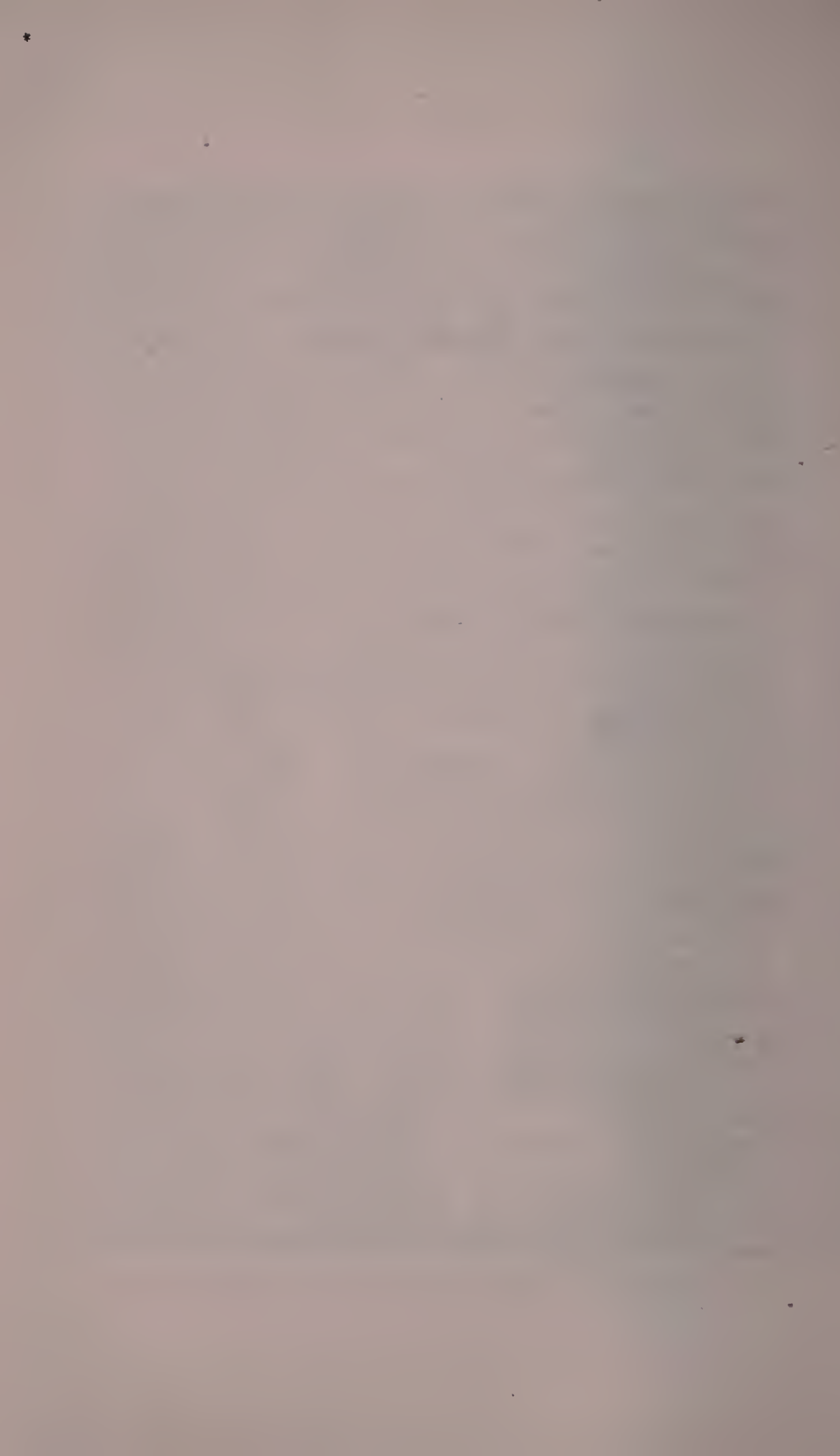
The great architectural features of the city are, of course, the palaces and temples. Of the splendor and magnitude of these buildings it is hard to convey any adequate idea. Of the palace of the first king, which occupies an enclosure not far from a mile in circumference, Dr. Bradley says :

"On entering the palace walls from the north, you find yourself in a large court-yard of perhaps three



HALL OF AUDIENCE, PALACE OF BANGKOK.







acres of ground, occupied by the royal court houses, armory, etc. And passing onward towards the old royal audience hall, you come to another heavy wall and a double gate. But this wall does not extend all around the royal palace, as some have thought. It only separates a small portion of the whole plat of the palace ground from the much larger and much more sacred part, viz., that part where the supreme king lives, and has a grand separate palace for his queen, and smaller ones for each one of his numerous concubines. The royal harem is in fact itself a compact little city of brick buildings, all of them covered with earthen tiles. Our readers may well conceive that it must needs require a large space to furnish room for one hundred or more distinct palaces, and numerous streets of ample width, and a bazaar and market of respectable size, and many other brick buildings too numerous to mention.

“ Water is conducted into the royal harem by conduits coming from the river, six or eight feet below the surface of the ground, and these are made accessible to the inmates of the harem by numerous unguarded openings in the flagged streets. These openings the Siamese call *baws*—that is, cisterns or wells.

“ The royal mint is located within the second wall of the palace, in a retired part of the court yard, from which you pass into the old audience hall.

“ The late king built for himself a new palace on the eastern side of this palace ground. It was a great improvement on all of its predecessors, and opened into the eastern palace court, which is also

separated from the king's residence by high and heavy walls, forming the back parts of buildings within. From this court there are three large gates, probably the finest gates of the palace, opening eastward into a broad street which runs north and south. On the east side of this is a large lawn of several acres, bounded on the east by two long blocks of fine two-story brick buildings, one of which was erected early in the last reign, and the other in the after part of it.

“The area of land comprised within the walls of the palace of the first king is about forty-three and a half acres. The number of souls who live within the walls has been differently estimated from five to ten thousand. Our impression is that the former number is the one nearer the truth. It is not probable that the population has much changed since the reign of Prabat Somdetch Pra Nang Klow, who is commonly reported to have had three hundred concubines. Be this as it may, he had hundreds more than the late king, and each one of them must have had a separate dwelling. His majesty, the present supreme king, has not as yet, of course, nearly as many wives and concubines as his late royal sire had, and it is fervently to be hoped he never will have. Nevertheless, we suppose that nearly all the dwellings in that royal harem not occupied by the wives and concubines of his majesty, are occupied by the greater part of the mothers and grandmothers of the late king's children and their families, together with the many female officers of the harem, and the host of female servants of the king, and the

female slaves connected with the many mothers. All the princes who have attained to their manhood are obliged to leave the harem, and their mothers usually go with them.

“Our space will not allow of any extended remarks on the palace of the second king. Suffice it to say that it comprises an area of ground little less than the palace of the first king. But the ground is not as thickly populated, neither do its buildings indicate as much of wealth and regal glory. And this is quite in harmony with Siamese ideas of rank. His majesty, the late second king, beautified and enriched his premises in many respects. He built him a new palace, and made it more European in style than the new palace of the first king. He was a prince of most excellent mechanical taste, and had it been suitable to his rank and means, he would have made his palace of the first order—an *elysium* of the East.”

Bowring adds to this description of the palaces, the statement that in the palace of the first king, “not far from the grand hall, is an elevated platform, mounted by several marble steps, on which is a throne, where the king gives daily audience in the presence of more than a hundred nobles prostrated around. If anything is to be conveyed to the king, it is pushed forward by nobles, who advance on all-fours, but whose great care seems to be to elevate nothing above the heads of the surrounding attendants. Any letter from or for the king is conveyed in a golden vase. Enormous statues in granite, imported from China, are generally found at the en-



trances to the different departments of the palace. These statues often represent monstrous giants, dragons, birds with human heads, and all the devices of a creative but rude and superstitious invention. I have sometimes remarked huge figures in granite, representing European costumes, both military and civil; though the prevailing taste is that of ancient Chinese art, with all the grotesque and cumbrous adornings of by-gone centuries."

Specimens of these statues appear in our engravings of the "Hall of Audience."

The magnificence and costliness of the temples is still greater than of the palaces. There is a statement (which is not perfectly authenticated) that at the coronation of each new king, there is constructed and set up in one of the royal temples a statue of Buddha, of the size of life, and of solid gold. The temple within the enclosure of the palace of the first king is probably the most richly decorated of any in the kingdom. It has mats of silver on the floor. It has within it a large collection of curiosities and articles of value and beauty, not only from Siam, but from China and from Europe. There is in it also the celebrated cross-legged statue of Buddha, known as the emerald idol. It is about a foot and a half high, and of great antiquity and beauty. Barring questions whether it can be of emerald, preferring to believe that it must be of malachite or green porphyry.

The architecture of these palaces and temples harmonizes admirably with the tropical landscape in which they are situated. Among them, and among



PORTICO OF THE AUDIENCE HALL AT BANGKOK.









the humbler dwellings of the multitude, the various figures of Siamese, Chinese, Malay and European, heathen and Christian, Mussulman, Parsee and Buddhist pass in the daily pursuits of livelihood or wealth or pleasure. Groups of priests swarming about the wats, striving with abstracted gaze to look uninterested in all earthly things, receiving with a stony indifference the gifts and offerings of the faithful, heedless alike of prince and peasant ; a royal procession by water, with the carved and gilded barge and its hundred rowers ; a nobleman with his retinue of servants attending him for various offices ; the foreign merchants of diverse nationalities ; the quiet, amiable faces of the common people, in boat, or street, or shop, or floating dwelling ; all these make up a panorama of constant and unique interest, which once seen cannot be soon forgotten.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### NATURAL PRODUCTIONS OF SIAM.

THE varieties of animal and vegetable life with which the tropics everywhere abound, are in Siam almost innumerable. From the gigantic elephant and rhinoceros in the jungle to the petty mosquitoes that infest the dwellings and molest the slumbers of the crowded city ; from the gigantic Indian fig-tree to the tiniest garden-blossom, an almost infinite diversity of life and growth invites attention. The work of scientific observation and classification has been, as yet, only very imperfectly accomplished. Much has been done by the missionaries, especially by Dr. House of the American Presbyterian mission, who is a competent and scientific observer. And the lamented Mouhot gathered vast and valuable collections in the almost unexplored regions to which he penetrated. But no doubt there are still undiscovered treasures of which men of science will presently lay hold.

“ Elephants,” says Bowring, “ are abundant in the forests of Siam, and grow sometimes to the height of twelve or thirteen feet. The habits of the elephant are gregarious ; but though he does not

willingly attack a man, he is avoided as dangerous ; and a troop of elephants will, when going down to a river to drink, submerge a boat and its passengers. The destruction even of the wild elephant is prohibited by royal orders, yet many are surreptitiously destroyed for the sake of their tusks. At a certain time of the year, tame female elephants are let loose in the forests. They are recalled by the sound of a horn, and return accompanied by wild males, whom they compel, by blows of the proboscis, to enter the walled prisons which have been prepared for their capture. The process of taming commences by keeping them for several days without food ; then a cord is passed round their feet, and they are attached to a strong column. The delicacies of which they are most fond are then supplied them, such as sugar-canes, plantains, and fresh herbs ; and at the end of a few days the animal is domesticated and resigned to his fate.

“ Without the aid of the elephant, it would scarcely be possible to traverse the woods and jungles of Siam. He makes his way as he goes, crushing with his trunk all that resists his progress ; over deep morasses or sloughs he drags himself on his knees and belly. When he has to cross a stream, he ascertains the depth by his proboscis, advances slowly, and when he is out of his depth he swims, breathing through his trunk, which is visible when the whole of his body is submerged. He descends into ravines impassable by man, and by the aid of his trunk ascends



steep mountains. His ordinary pace is about four to five miles an hour, and he will journey day and night if properly fed. When weary, he strikes the ground with his trunk, making a sound resembling a horn, which announces to his driver that he desires repose. In Siam the howdah is a great roofed basket, in which the traveller, with the aid of his cushions, comfortably ensconces himself. The motion is disagreeable at first, but ceases to be so after a little practice.

“Elephants in Siam are much used in warlike expeditions, both as carriers and combatants. All the nobles are mounted on them, and as many as a thousand are sometimes collected. They are marched against palisades and entrenchments. In the late war with Cochin-China, the Siamese general surprised the enemy with some hundreds of elephants, to whose tails burning torches were attached. They broke into the camp, and destroyed more than a thousand Cochin-Chinese, the remainder of the army escaping by flight.

“Of elephants in Siam, M. de Bruguières gives some curious anecdotes. He says that there was one in Bangkok which was habitually sent by his keeper to collect a supply of food, which he never failed to do, and that it was divided regularly between his master and himself on his return home ; and that there was another elephant, which stood at the door of the king’s palace, before whom a large vessel filled with rice was placed, which he helped out with a spoon to every talapoin (bonze) who passed.

“ His account of the Siamese mode of capturing wild elephants is not dissimilar to that which has been already given. But he adds that, in taming the captured animals, every species of torture is used : he is lifted by a machine in the air—fire is placed under his belly—he is compelled to fast—he is goaded with sharp irons, till reduced to absolute submission. The tame elephants co-operate with their masters, and, when thoroughly subdued, the victim is marched away with the rest.

“ Some curious stories are told by La Loubère of the sagacity of elephants, as reported by the Siamese. In one case, an elephant upon whose head his keeper had cracked a cocoa-nut, kept the fragments of the nut-shell for several days between his fore legs, and having found an opportunity of trampling on and killing the keeper, the elephant deposited the fragments upon the dead body.

“ I heard many instances of sagacity which might furnish interesting anecdotes for the zoologist. The elephants are undoubtedly proud of their gorgeous trappings, and of the attentions they receive. I was assured that the removal of the gold and silver rings from their tusks was resented by the elephants as an indignity, and that they exhibited great satisfaction at their restoration. The transfer of an elephant from a better to a worse stabling is said to be accompanied with marks of displeasure.”

If the elephant is in Siam the king of beasts, the white elephant is the king of elephants. This famous animal is simply an albino, and owes his celebrity and sanctity to the accident of disease. He

is not really white, (except in spots ;) his color is a faded pink, or, as Bowring states of the specimen he saw, a light mahogany. In September, 1870, however, a very extraordinary elephant arrived in Bangkok, having been escorted from Paknam with many royal honors. A large part of the body of this animal was really white, and great excitement and delight was produced by its arrival at the capital. The elephant which Bowring saw and described died within a year after his visit. She occupied a large apartment within the grounds of the first king's palace, and not far off, in an elevated position, was placed a golden chair for the king to occupy when he should come to visit her. "She had a number of attendants, who were feeding her with fresh grass, (which I thought she treated somewhat disdainfully,) sugar-cane and plantains. She was richly caparisoned in cloth of gold and ornaments, some of which she tore away and was chastised for the offence by a blow on the proboscis by one of the keepers. She was fastened to an upright pole by ropes covered with scarlet cloth, but at night was released, had the liberty of the room, and slept against a matted and ornamented partition, sloping from the floor at about an angle of forty-five degrees. In a corner of the room was a caged monkey of pure white, but seemingly very active and mischievous. The prince fed the elephant with sugar-cane, which appeared her favorite food ; the grass she seemed disposed to toss about rather than to eat. She had been trained to make a salaam by lifting her proboscis over the neck, and



did so more than once at the prince's bidding. The king sent me the bristles of the tail of the last white elephant to look at; they were fixed in a gold handle, such as ladies use for their nosegays at balls."

There seems some reason for believing that the condition of the white elephant is not at present quite so luxurious as it used to be. Advancing civilization begins to make it evident, even to the Siamese, that there are other things more admirable and more worthy of reverence. It was noticed that the late second king, especially, did not always speak of the noble creature with the solemnity which ancient usage would have justified,—and even seemed to think that there was something droll in the veneration which was given to it. But the superstition in regard to it is by no means extinct; and the presence of one of these animals is still believed to be a pledge of prosperity to the king and country. "Hence," says Bowring, "the white elephant is sought with intense ardor, the fortunate finder rewarded with honors, and he is treated with attention almost reverential. This prejudice is traditional, and dates from the earliest times. When a tributary king, or governor of a province has captured a white elephant, he is directed to open a road through the forest for the comfortable transit of the sacred animal; and when he reaches the Meinam, he is received on a magnificent raft, with a chintz canopy, and garlanded with flowers. He occupies the centre of the raft, and is pampered with cakes and sugar. A noble of high rank, sometimes a prince of

royal blood, (and on the last occasion both the first and second kings,) accompanied by a great concourse of barges, with music and bands of musicians, go forth to welcome his arrival. Every barge has a rope attached to the raft, and perpetual shouts of joy attend the progress of the white elephant to the capital, where, on his arrival, he is met by the great dignitaries of the State, and by the monarch himself, who gives the honored visitor some sonorous name, and confers on him the rank of nobility. He is conducted to a palace which is prepared for him, where a numerous court awaits him, and a number of officers and slaves are appointed to administer to his wants in vessels of gold and silver.

“ A superabundance of delicacies is provided for his repast ; if his tusks are grown, they are enriched with rings ; a sort of diadem is placed on his head ; and his attendants prostrate themselves, as in the presence of the great nobles. When conducted to the bath, a huge red parasol is held over him ; music and a *cortége* of slaves accompany him on his march. In case of illness, he is attended by a court physician ; the priests wait upon him, offer up prayers for his recovery, and sprinkle him with consecrated water : and on his death there is a universal mourning, and distinguished funeral honors are paid to his remains.”

It is believed that these albinos are found only in Siam and its dependencies, and the white elephant (on a red ground) has been made the flag of the kingdom. It is probable enough that the festival of the white elephant, which at the present

day is celebrated in Japan,\* (the elephant being an enormous paste-board structure "marching on the feet of men enclosed in each one of the four legs,") may be a tradition of the intercourse between that country and Siam, which was formerly more intimate than at present.

"The white monkeys enjoy almost the same privileges as the white elephant; they are called *pája*, have household and other officers, but must yield precedence to the elephant. The Siamese say that 'the monkey is a man,—not very handsome, to be sure; but no matter, he is not less our brother.' If he does not speak, it is from prudence, dreading lest the king should compel him to labor for him without pay; nevertheless, it seems he has spoken, for he was once sent in the quality of generalissimo to fight, if I mistake not, an army of giants. With one kick he split a mountain in two; and report goes that he finished the war with honor.

"The Siamese have more respect for white animals than for those of any other color. They say that when a talapoin meets a white cock, he salutes him,—an honor he will not pay a prince."

Tigers are abundant in the jungle, but are more frequently dangerous to other animals, both wild and domestic, than to men. The rhinoceros, the buffalo, bears, wild pigs, deer, gazelles, and other smaller animals inhabit the forests. Monkeys are

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\* See Illustrated Library of Travel, Exploration, and Adventure Japan, p. 201.



abundant. In Cambodia, Mouhot found several new species. And the orang-outang is found on the Malayan peninsula. Various species of cats, and among them tailless cats like those of Japan, are also to be found. Bats are abundant, some of them said to be nearly as large as a cat. They are fond of dwelling among the trees of the temple-grounds, and Pallegoix says (but it seems that the good bishop must have overstated the case, as other travellers have failed to notice such a phenomenon) that "at night they hang over the city of Bangkok like a dense black cloud, which appears to be leagues in length."

Birds are abundant, and often of great size and beauty; some of them sweet singers, some of them skillful mimics, some of them useful as scavengers. Peacocks, parrots, parroquets, crows, jays, pigeons, in great numbers and variety, inhabit the forest trees.

What the elephant is in the forest, the crocodile is in the rivers, the king of creeping things. The eggs of the crocodile are valued as a delicacy; but the business of collecting them is attended with so many risks that it is not regarded as a popular or cheerful avocation. It will be well for the collector to have a horse at hand on which he can take immediate flight. The infuriated mother seldom fails, says Pallegoix, to rush out in defence of her progeny.

"At Bangkok there are professional crocodile-charmers. If a person is reported to have been seized by a crocodile, the king orders the animal to

be captured. The charmer, accompanied by many boats, and a number of attendants with spears and ropes, visits the spot where the presence of the crocodile has been announced, and, after certain ceremonies, writes to invite the presence of the crocodile. The crocodile-charmer, on his appearance, springs on his back, and gouges his eyes with his fingers; while the attendants spring into the water, some fastening ropes round his throat, others round his legs, till the exhausted monster is dragged to the shore and deposited in the presence of the authorities. Father Pallegoix affirms that the Annamite Christians of his communion are eminently adroit in these dangerous adventures. and that he has himself seen as many as fifty crocodiles in a single village so taken, and bound to the uprights of the houses. But his account of the Cambodian mode of capture is still more remarkable. He says that the Cambodian river-boats carry hooks, which, by being kept in motion, catch hold of the crocodiles; that during the struggle, a knot is thrown over the animal's tail; that the extremity of the tail is cut off, and a sharp bamboo passed through the vertebræ of the spine into the brain, when the animal expires.

“There are many species of lizards; the largest is the *takuet*. His name has passed into a Siamese proverb, as the representative of a crafty, double-dealing knave; as the *takuet* has two tongues, or rather one tongue divided into two.” This is perhaps the lizard (about twice as large as the American bull-frog) which comes into the dwellings

unmolested and makes himself extremely useful by his destruction of vermin. He is a noisy creature, however, with a prodigious voice. He begins with a loud and startling whirr-r-r-r, like the drumming of a partridge or the running down of an alarm-clock, and follows up the sensation which he thus produces by the distinct utterance of the syllables, "To-kay," four or five times repeated. He is not only harmless but positively useful, but it takes a good while for a stranger to become so well acquainted with him that the sound of his cry from the ceiling, over one's bed, for instance, and waking one from a sound sleep, is not somewhat alarming.

There is no lack of serpents, large and small. Pallegoix mentions one that will follow any light or torch in the darkness, and is only to be avoided by extinguishing or abandoning the light which has attracted him. There are serpent-charmers, as in other parts of India. They extract the poison from certain kinds of vipers, and then train them to fight with one another, to dance, and perform various tricks.

Some kinds of fish have already been described,\* but Pallagoix mentions one or two other varieties that are interesting, and, so far as known, peculiar to Siamese waters. One, "a large fish, called the meng-phu, weighing from thirty to forty pounds, of a bright greenish-blue color, will spring out of the water to attack and bite bathers." He says

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\* See page 17.



there "is also a tetraodon, called by the Siamese the moon, without teeth, but with jaws sharp as scissors ; it can inflate itself so as to become round as a ball ; it attacks the toes, the calf, and the thighs of bathers, and, as it carries away a portion of the flesh, a wound is left which it is difficult to heal."

Of centipedes, scorpions, ants, mosquitoes, and the various pests and plagues common to all tropical countries, it is not necessary to speak in detail. And of the wonderful fire-flies a description has already been given.\*

Sir John Bowring considered that sugar was likely to become the principal export of Siam, but thus far it would seem that rice has taken the precedence. The gutta-percha tree, all kinds of palms, and of fruits a vast and wonderful variety, (among which are some peculiar to Siam,) are abundant. The durian and mangosteen are the most remarkable, and have already been described. So far as is known, they grow only in the regions adjacent to the Gulf of Siam and the Straits of Sunda. And though there are many fruits common to these and to all tropical countries which are more useful, (such as the banana, of which there are said to be in Siam not less than fifty varieties, "in size from a little finger to an elephant's tusk,") there are none more curious than these. The season of the mangosteen is the same with that of the durian. The tree grows about fifteen feet high, and the foliage is extremely glossy and dark. The

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See page 81.

fruit may be eaten in large quantities with safety, and is of incomparable delicacy of flavor. No fruit in the world has won such praises as the mangosteen.

Of the mineral treasures of Siam enough has been already indicated in the description of the wealth and magnificence which is everywhere apparent. We need only add that coal of excellent quality and in great abundance has been recently discovered ; and that during the year 1870 among the exports from Bangkok was tin to the value of \$154,000.





THE NEW PALACE OF THE KING OF SIAM, BANGKOK.





## CHAPTER XXII.

### CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN SIAM—THE OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE.

NO account of the present condition of Siam can be at all complete which does not notice the history of missionary enterprise in that country. Allusion has already been made to the efforts of Roman Catholic missionaries, Portuguese and French, to introduce Christianity and to achieve for the Church a great success by the conversion of the king and his people. The scheme failed, and the political intrigue which was involved in it came also to an ignominious conclusion ; and the first era of Roman Catholic missions in Siam closed in 1780, when a royal decree banished the missionaries from the kingdom. They did not return in any considerable numbers or to make any permanent residence until 1830. In that year the late Bishop Pallegoix, to whom we owe so much of our knowledge of the country and the people, (and who died a few years since, sincerely respected and beloved by Buddhists and by Christians,) was appointed to resume the interrupted labors of the Roman Catholic Church. Under his zealous

and skillful management, much of a certain kind of success has been achieved, but very few of the converts are to be found among the native Siamese. There is at present on the ground a force of about twenty missionaries, including a vicar apostolic and a bishop. Their converts may number from seven to ten thousand, chiefly from the Chinese population.

The religious success of the Protestant missionaries, which has not been very encouraging, has also been in the first place and for the most part among the Chinese residents. A few Siamese converts are reported within the past few years. The first Protestant mission was that of the American Baptist Board, which was on the ground within three years after the arrival of Bishop Pallegoix. The Baptists were followed within a few years by Congregationalists and Presbyterians from the United States, and the operations of the Protestant missionaries of different denominations have been conducted with unremitting courage, diligence and fidelity.

At first sight these years of effort might seem to have resulted in failure. The statistics show but little accomplished; the roll of communicants seems insignificant. And of the sincerity and intelligence even of this small handful there are occasional misgivings. And on the whole, those who are quick to criticise and to oppose foreign missions might seem to have a good argument and to find a case in point, in the history of missions in Siam.

But really the success of these efforts has been



extraordinary, although the history of them exhibits an order of results almost without precedent. Ordinarily, the religious enlightenment of a people comes first, and the civilization follows as a thing of course. But here the Christianization of the nation has scarcely begun, but its civilization has made (as this volume has abundantly shown) much more than a beginning.

For it is to the labors of the Christian missionaries in Siam that the remarkable advancement of the kings and nobles, and even of some of the common people, in general knowledge and even in exact science, is owing. The usurpation which kept the last two kings (the first and second) nearly thirty years from their thrones was really of great advantage both to them and to their kingdom. Shut out from any very active participation in political affairs, their restless and intelligent minds were turned into new channels of activity. The elder brother in his cloister, the younger in his study and his workshop, busied themselves with the pursuit of knowledge. The elder, as a priest of Buddhism, turned naturally to the study of language and literature. The younger busied himself with natural science, and more especially with mathematical and military science. The Roman Catholic priests were ready instructors of the elder brother in the Latin language. And among the American missionaries there were some with a practical knowledge of various mechanical arts. It was from them that the two brothers learned English and received the assistance and advice which

they needed in order to perfect themselves in Western science. At a very early day they began to be familiar with them ; to receive them and their wives on terms of friendly and fraternal intimacy ; to send for them whenever counsel or practical aid was needed in their various philosophical pursuits and experiments. Through the printing-presses of the Protestant missions much has been done to arouse the people from the lethargy of centuries and to diffuse among them useful intelligence of every sort. The late king was not content until he established a press of his own, of which he made constant and busy use. The medical missionaries, by their charitable work among the rich, in the healing of disease and by instituting various sanitary and precautionary expedients, have done much to familiarize all classes with the excellence of Western science, and to draw attention and respect to the civilization which they represent. It is due to the Christian missionaries, and (without any disparagement to the excellence of the Roman Catholic priests,) we may say especially to the American missionaries, more than to any enterprise of commerce or shrewdness of diplomacy, that Siam is so far advanced in its intercourse with other nations. When Sir John Bowring came in 1855 to negotiate his treaty, he found that, instead of having to deal with an ignorant, narrow and savage government, the two kings and some of the noblemen were educated gentlemen, well fitted to discuss with him, with intelligent skill and fairness, the important matters which he had in

hand. Sir John did his work for the most part ably and well. But the fruit was ripe before he plucked it. And it was by the patient and persistent labors of the missionaries for twenty years that the results which he achieved were made not only possible but easy.

Hitherto the Buddhist religion, which prevails in Siam in a form probably more pure and simple than elsewhere, has firmly withstood the endeavors of the Christian missionaries to supplant it. The converts are chiefly from among the Chinese, who, for centuries past, and in great numbers, have made their homes in this fertile country, monopolizing much of its industry, and sometimes, with characteristic thriftiness, accumulating much wealth. They have intermarried with the Siamese, and have become a permanent element in the population, numbering, according to the estimate of Pallegoix, almost as many as the native Siamese, or *Thai*. For some reason, they seem to be more susceptible to the influence of the Christian teachers, and many of them have given evidence of a sincere and intelligent attachment to the Christian faith. The native Siamese, however, though acknowledging the superiority of Christian science, and expressing much personal esteem and attachment for the missionaries, give somewhat scornful heed, or no heed at all, to the religious truths which they inculcate. The late second king was suspected of cherishing secretly a greater belief in Christianity than he was willing to avow. But after his death, his brother, the first king, very emphatically and



somewhat angrily denied that there was any ground for such suspicions concerning him. For himself, though willing to be regarded as the founder of a new and more liberal school of Buddhism, he was the steady "defender of the faith" in which he was nurtured, and in the priesthood of which so many years of his life were passed. He seldom did anything which looked like persecution of the missionaries, but contented himself with occasionally snubbing them in a patronizing or more or less contemptuous manner. This attitude of contemptuous indifference is also that which is commonly assumed by the Buddhist priests. "Do you think," said one of them on some occasion to the missionaries, "do you think you will beat down our great mountains with your small tools?" And on another occasion the king is reported to have said that there was about as much probability that the Buddhists would convert the Christians, as that the Christians would convert the Buddhists.

But there can be little doubt with those who take a truly philosophical view of the future of Siam, and still less with those who take a religious view of it, that this advancement in civilization must open the way for religious enlightenment as well. Thus far there has come only the knowledge which "puffeth up." And how much it puffeth up, is evident from the pedantic documents which used to issue from the facile pen of his majesty, the late first king. A little more slowly, but none the less surely, there must come as well that Christian charity which "buildeth up." So, every

time the "spicy breezes," sweeping across the busy river, wake the music of the innumerable pagoda bells, they ring prophetic of the better day. Wiser and broader views of missionary labor will no doubt prevail in time, and increasing experience will suggest more practical and efficient methods. But the faith and patience of the zealous men and women who have labored now for forty years in the name and in the spirit of Christ, has not been and shall not be in vain. Those golden bells, swinging over the high roofs of splendid temples, and of stately palaces, over palm and banyan, and shining river, and crowded city, shall more and more

"Ring out the darkness of the land—  
Ring in the Christ that is to be."

Even if the work of the missionaries should cease to-day, the results accomplished would be of immense and permanent value. They have introduced Christian science. They have made a beginning of Christian literature, by the translation of the Scriptures. They have awakened an insatiable appetite for Christian civilization. And the end is not yet.

THE END.





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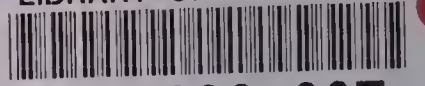








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